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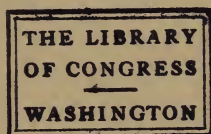






# "THE MORNING COMETH."

TALKS FOR THE TIMES.



BY

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# CONTENTS.

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Watchman, What of the Night? .....	PAGE 5
The Pilot of the Fleet.....	15
The Soul's Moorings.....	28
The Children in the Market-Place.....	37
Let Us Go On .....	47
A Sensational Gospel .....	56
Character Building .....	67
Seven Wonders.....	75
Solomon; or, a Worldly Wiseman at his Best .....	83
Asking the Way .....	92
The Work of the Comforter .....	100
The Mother of Jesus .....	108
Come In, Thou Blessed of the Lord. A New Year's Meditation..	117
The Testimony of Infidels to the Truth of Christianity.....	125
The Church and the People .....	140
The Church in the Catacombs.....	148
A Busy Man's Blunder .....	156
The Baptism of Jesus .....	164
The Pharisee's Prayer .....	172
The Publican's Prayer .....	180

Washington's Religion.....	188
The Bible being Disposed of, What Then? .....	198
The Lost Name.....	209
The Old Landmarks.....	219
The Least Commandment .....	227
Singing as we Journey .....	235
The Happy Man.....	243
What Makes a Gentleman?.....	253
Darkness at High Noon.....	260
What Christianity Has Done for the Workingman.....	268
Shall We Know Each Other in Heaven?.....	277
We Beheld his Glory.....	287
Judas Iscariot; or, the Flower, Fruit, and Ashes of Sin .....	296
Ahab's Harness.....	304
The Song of the Vineyard .....	312

# “The Morning Cometh.”

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## WATCHMAN, WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

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“The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will inquire, inquire ye: return, come.” Isa. 21:11, 12.

OURS is probably the one lost world of the universe. There are hundreds of millions of worlds floating in the sea of infinite space, and it may be that multitudes of them are inhabited; if so, the probability is immense that not one of those orbs has ever swerved from its moral orbit. Sin is abnormal, unnatural. Sin is the sad prerogative of the human race. It is the trade-mark of this world of ours. If things transpiring here are known to the inhabitants of other spheres, the story of our disaster must be told among them as a weird, uncanny tale. It must be incomprehensible to beings who have not lost their innocence as children of God.

It was an awful thing when sin entered into this world, and death by sin. When God created it he said, This is very good. The pride with which an artist looks upon his master-piece is but a faint token of God's satisfaction with his perfect work. And all his sons shouted for joy. When he created man he breathed into his nostrils the breath of a divine and immortal life; and thenceforth, so to speak, he expected great things of him. If all the hopes

which fond fathers are entertaining for their children, if all the dreams of loving mothers looking down into the cradles of their little ones, were bound in one, they could but faintly shadow forth the purposes which were in the divine heart with respect to the newly created race.

Then came the fall. We sometimes speak of it lightly. Perhaps the controversies of the ages have taught us levity. The secular press is wont to speak facetiously of the eating of the forbidden fruit and to quote jocosely the old New England rhyme :

" In Adam's fall  
We sinnéd all."

But oh, beloved, it was no slight matter when the world swung out of its orbit. We mourn when a ship goes down. Our hearts ache and tremble when the famine and the pestilence sweep over a neighbor land. What then must have been the responsive thrill in the celestial worlds when it was known that the newly peopled earth had passed into the dark shadow of spiritual death ! It was as if the noonday sun had suddenly gone out. Hope and noble purposes and aspirations all ceased, as birds hush their songs and fold their wings at twilight. The earth was enveloped in night.

Night is the time when mists hang over the valley and miasms rise from stagnant pools. Night is the time when bats rustle their leathery wings and vampires suck their fill of life. Night is the time when beasts prowl in the forests and the hyena pursues its ghastly quest among the tombs. Night is the time when the pestilence stalks abroad, when vices come out of their lurking-places, when bestiality reels through the streets hiccoughing its bacchanalian songs. Night is the time when infants



wail, when the sick turn upon their restless beds and cry, "Would God it were morning!" when wives and mothers press their anguish-stricken faces against the window-panes and hearken for the sound of uneven steps. Night is the time when from upper chambers comes the sound of rattling dice and laughter like the crackling of thorns. Night is the time when the spark gleams under the lintel of the door unhindered. Night is the time when Catiline meets his friends and revenges are plotted. Now silence reigns unbroken save by the foot-fall of the guardian of the peace. Now is the harvest home of sin and ignorance, of disease and death.

How appropriate that the reign of unrighteousness which began with our federal head should be characterized as night. The race began its life in a garden. It passed under sentence of death out through the gates to grope and suffer and toil. Its happiness was a dim memory, a regretful dream. So utter and universal was this moral declension that God is represented as looking down from heaven to see if there were any that wrought righteousness, and sadly saying, "There is none that doeth good, no, not one."

On the walls of Zion the watchman paced to and fro. And out of the deep darkness came the inquiry, Watchman, what of the night? Is it fair or foul? What is the promise of the dawn? And the watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night! That is, the shadows of the night are vainly struggling with the advancing day.

I. *Stars of promise.* It was a glorious thing to be a watchman under the old economy. Though the world was shrouded in darkness the skies above were studded with the harbingers of day.

It was never God's purpose to leave the world in its

estate of sorrow and death. No sooner had Adam fallen than the protevangel was uttered, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." That was a bright star "flaming in the forehead of the morning sky;" nay, rather, it was a constellation, *Draco sub Christo*, a mighty one with a wounded foot pressed upon a writhing serpent's head. In it was the prophecy of the glorious day.

Out on the heights of Moab where sacrifices were wont to be offered to the Sun-god, a prophet of evil sought to curse the chosen people. Cursing was in his heart, but God had laid a finger on his lips. Down below were the tents of the wandering nation. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob," cried he perforce, "and thy tabernacles, O Israel! They shall be spread forth as a garden by the river-side. Blessed is he that blesseth thee and cursed is he that curseth thee." Once, twice, thrice did he vainly try to pronounce the curse; then his eyes were greeted with a strange vision. He saw one drawing nigh dimly through the darkness, in regal splendor, and he cried, "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh! A star cometh out of Jacob, and a sceptre out of Israel which shall govern the nations of the earth."

Along the bank of the Euphrates journeyed the father of the faithful. To him in the long hours of darkness were committed the oracles of God. Within the fluttering curtains of his tent were the hope and promise of the universal church. Again and again, when his heart failed him, God led him out under the mighty canopy of the heavens and said, "Behold, so shall thy seed be! So shall be the multitude of those who shall seek righteousness and honor the true God."

Thus in the long night of that economy of shadows,

the stars were kindled one by one until the oracles, like the glowing arch above, were radiant with them.

“ Look how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.”

It was the province of the watchman to direct the thought of the fallen race to these day-stars of promise, these harbingers of the approaching Christ. He stood upon the walls of Zion and cried, The mists and shadows scatter with the dawn ; the night lingereth, but the day cometh !

II. *Daybreak.* The darkest hour is just before the dawn. There was a period of four hundred years between the old and the new economy when all the stars were overcast in gloom. All open vision ceased. Men's hearts failed them for fear.

The first gleam of the morning was seen in far-away Persia by men bending over old parchments whereon were cabalistic signs and tokens. A new star in the heavens led them to the place where the Christ-child lay. The air was filled with singing—songs of the angels, of the tremulous lips of old prophets, of the virgin mother, of souls waiting for deliverance. Again all the sons of God shouted for joy. It was as when by the original fiat the darkness of chaos was scattered and the light shone upon the earth.

“ God said, Let there be light !  
Grim darkness felt his might  
And fled away.  
Then startled mists and mountains cold  
Shone forth all bright in blue and gold  
And cried, 'Tis day, 't is day !”

If it was glorious to be a watchman under the old economy, how much more to walk with the incarnate Jesus and

say, Behold the Lamb of God! His life was as the morning sun shining into the habitations of cruelty and the shadowy vale of death, yet how few there were that comprehended the glad tidings or knew that the long looked-for Golden Age had come. In polar lands, when the weary winter is drawing to a close, the people climb the hill-tops and wait for the approaching dawn. And when the crimson forehead of the sun is seen above the horizon they call in joyous greeting from hill-top to hill-top, "O beautiful Sun! O beautiful Sun!" How few there were to greet with joy like this the rising of the Sun of Righteousness who had healing in his beams! He came unto his own and his own received him not. The light shone in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not.

III. *The Sun hastening to the zenith.* If it was a splendid privilege in the olden time to point to the stars of promise, if it was a joy during the earthly ministry of Jesus to direct men to the grace of God shining in his beautiful face, how much more glorious is the privilege of the watchman now to stand upon the walls of Zion bidding the world behold how the sun shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. "Watchman, what of the night?" The shadows struggle with the dawn; nay, the day breaketh; nay, better still, the high noon of truth and righteousness draweth nigh. We preach not the Christ of prophecy, nor yet the Christ infleshed and walking among men, but the historic Christ who has vindicated his love and wisdom and omnipotence in eighteen centuries of triumphal progress.

We are living in an unfortunate time for pessimists. The bulk of religious prosperity was never so great since the foundation of the world. The signs of religious progress all around the horizon are so conspicuous and con-

clusive that fault-finding at this juncture must needs suggest an impairment of the biliary or digestive functions. The arm of the Lord is gloriously made bare for the overthrow of iniquitous strongholds and for the upbuilding of the kingdom of righteousness. Nations of the earth are prostrating themselves before the Lord Christ. The flocks of Kedar are gathered together and the rams of Nebaioth are ministering unto him. The air is full of the rustling of doves' wings and the crackling of the boughs of Lebanon. (Isa. 60.)

(1.) In the matter of Faith. There never was a time in human history when men were so loyal to the landmarks of truth. There never was a time when the blessed Bible was entrenched in so many faithful hearts. True, there are controversies. God be praised! The worst that ever can befall the Christian Church is stagnation. The kingdom of God is not likely to suffer from any investigation of its truth. To be sure, there are heretics and schismatics. They perish by the way and their work serves but to strengthen the battlements of truth, as coral insects toiling in unknown depths leave their bones as a contribution to the continents of coming ages. The truth had never so many stalwart friends as it has this day.

(2.) As to Christian Ethics. Ideals are higher than ever. Character means more. The character of Jesus stands out more distinctly as the Exemplar of morals. His incomparable portrait is the touchstone of character. More is expected of men than ever before in human history. More is expected of kings, of politicians, of merchants, of the average man. Compare the dignitaries of our time with those of a few centuries ago: Queen Victoria with Elizabeth, the President of the French Republic with Louis the Grand, Gladstone with Machiavelli, Presi-

dent Harrison with our Continental governors, the citizen, the country gentleman, the ordinary church-goer or the non-church-goer with those of a hundred years ago. I say the ideals are higher and men are more eager in striving after them. There is more respect for common honesty, for chastity and temperance, for benevolence. Many of the vices that were common have disappeared from public view. Human life is held in higher veneration. Profane swearing is vulgar now. Gambling is for the race-track and locked chambers. It was once a common thing for gentlemen to be dragged from under their tables to their beds. Now public inebriety is ruin to any public man. Baccarat, that would have been regarded as a mere peccadillo in Prince Hal, is a standing horror against the present Prince of Wales. Loosenesses that once were common at royal courts are now banished to the slums. Our home-life is sweeter and purer. Fathers have a more reasonable tenure of authority. Wives are more beloved and respected. Childhood is granted its proper rights. The vices of society are more decent and its virtues more conspicuous. In most quarters character is the passport into social life. Silly, sensual beauty is little thought of.

"The rank is but the guinea stamp:  
The man's the gowd."

So is it in industrial life. The workman is at the top. He is a self-respecting, honest man, "who knows his rights, and knowing, dare maintain." He claims an honest day's wages for an honest day's work. At the same time the rights of capital are held securely; and the controversies of Capital and Labor are drawing to a settlement under the beneficent influence of the Golden Rule. We note a similar advance in political ethics. Freedom is



contagious. Kings are held in restraint. The word People is written with a capital initial. Legislators rule in equity and courts administer justice in righteousness. Star chambers and bloody councils are antiquated landmarks. Wars are giving way to arbitration. The masses are being educated. Milton's Angel of Light is waving his torch along the remotest confines of darkness. "Watchman, what of the night?" The sun rises higher and higher: it shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day!

(3.) And what shall be said of the great propaganda? Our own is the Golden Age of the Kingdom of God. We are building churches, hospitals, reformatories, at home; and we are stretching the cords of the tabernacle to the remotest parts of the earth. The recent census of the United States tells us that one-third of our entire population is in organic connection with some religious body. Was the like ever known since the foundation of the world? One in every three—men, women, and children—an avowed seeker after the true God! Other nations are being similarly blessed. The gates of the Dark Continent are being thrown open to the light.

It was but a hundred years ago that William Carey sat in his cobbler shop in Northamptonshire, his attention divided between the lapstone on his knee and a map of the world hanging on the wall. He said, "There is gold to be mined in India. I will go down after it if you will hold the ropes." He sailed for that pagan land a hundred years ago, went down into the mine, and souls have been responding to that deed of consecration, born out of Carey's travail, in countless multitudes—gold minted in the heavenly treasury and stamped with the image and superscription of our King! Oh, friends, everything is going right. The nations of the earth are coming unto

our God. "Watchman, what of the night?" There is no night! The darkness is past and gone, the Sun of Righteousness hath risen with healing in his beams! Be glad and rejoice, O people of God; the sun shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day!

It is a joy to be a watchman in these times. When the Bastile fell there was a controversy as to who should have the privilege of opening the dungeon doors. How much more shall we strive for the privilege of bearing the truth and the glad prophecies of life to those who still are enveloped in shadows! What a joy to draw the bolts and say as to those bewildered souls of the Bastile, who for years had not heard a human voice nor seen the shining sun, "Come forth! The day is bright, the air is clear, the earth is glorified with the beauty of the Lord; come out and rejoice with us!" Oh, friends, let us rejoice together. The sun shineth brighter, brighter, brighter, brighter unto the perfect day!



## THE PILOT OF THE FLEET.\*

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“ Their line is gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world.”—Psa. 19:4.

A polyglot psalter in the Astor Library is enriched by marginal notes made by the Bishop Justinian of Corsica. Opposite Psalm 19:4 is written, “ Columbus boasteth that he is appointed to fulfil this prophecy.”

OUR God is the God of nations. The path of history is lined on either side with the ruins of thrones and dynasties. God reared them and God overturned them. At a time when we are singing the praises of Columbus as the discoverer of the new world it is wise to remind ourselves that he was controlled by the sovereign God. He was indeed entitled the Admiral of the Ocean Seas; but while it is important to know the full measure of his achievement, it is far more important to inquire who piloted his fleet.

In our inquiry as to the special providences which the most casual observer must detect in the romantic story of the discovery of the new world, the theme falls naturally into a three-fold division: The time, The man for the time, The man's Master.

I. *As to the time.* Is it not a curious fact that for so many centuries a continent should have been held in reserve? It was suspected, dreamed of, but never known. Why? Was God holding it for the exigencies of the future, for the enlargement of Zion? It could not be dis-

\* This sermon was preached by Dr. Burrell on the four-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America by Columbus.

covered. The opening up of that continent was not to occur until the right moment. All things in divine providence occur when the hands of God's dial point to the fulness of the time.

This event occurred in the morning twilight that followed the Dark Ages. It was an era of universal awakening.

(1.) It was marked by a general revival of learning. The best blood of Europe had been vainly poured out in the Crusades. Vainly? Armies of indomitable men had marked their pathways through the deserts with bleaching bones. For what? God reigns and overrules all things for ultimate good. The remnant of those devoted armies brought back from the Orient some of the learning of the East. It has been asserted by authority that not one priest in a thousand in Spain could write a letter of greeting to his friend. In England things were scarcely better. The Bible was a sealed book. A few learned scholars in the monasteries sat poring over their old parchments and illuminating their breviaries while the people, rude and ignorant, were starving for the living bread under the shadow of the sacred walls. But the darkness was broken when the Crusades brought Arabia into contact with the West.

One day in 1430 Lawrence Coster, a Dutchman in the sleepy old town of Haarlem, went out with his children along the towpath for a day in the country, to hear the birds sing and breathe a little of God's fresh air. In the beech grove he paused and cut his boy's initials. And there a happy thought occurred to him: "Why not carve letters in wood, ink them over, and make an impression on paper?" A happy thought! It was a sun-burst. That was the birth of the printing-press. Books began to

multiply. The Bible came into the market for 750 crowns. Light began to shine into the hearts and consciences of the people.

(2.) This period is also characterized as the day-break of freedom. With the revival of learning it was inevitable that the individuality of man should struggle to rise.

The Pope's heel had been upon the neck of the king, and the king's heel had been upon the necks of the people. The Anglo-Saxon world had groaned under despotism.

On June 15, 1215, in the meadow at Runnymede the great charter was signed. It is commonly known as the fundamental instrument of civil freedom. As you look upon the old parchment now in the British Museum, you are struck with two peculiar facts; one is that the barons who exacted that instrument from King John were, for the most part, unable to affix their own signatures; they could only make the sign of the cross; the other is that no mention is made of the people. Magna Charta was in the interest of the barons. It was a mighty stride towards a glorious achievement, but it was only the first step. As yet there was no thought of the rights of man as man. Two centuries went by and the people were still the unrecognized masses, their rights still trampled under foot, but the Giant under Ætna was groaning and struggling to uplift himself. Men were beginning to make their personality felt. The people were claiming somewhat of their own. The Anglo-Saxon world was congested with vast populations which were jostling each other for elbow room and clamoring to be free.

(3.) This was also the birth-time of the Reformation. There had been a long night of a thousand years. All

sorts of vices hid behind the altar. There was a famine of the Word of God. The Bianchi wandered about with great crucifixes murmuring *Misericordia!* Flagellants went two and two along the thoroughfares chanting *Misereres* and scourging their naked backs. The mendicant friars were in their glory. This was the golden age of penance, Peter's pence, indulgences. Heaven was opened with a golden key. The most scandalous sins could be committed for a shilling. The world was burdened with an idle, avaricious, and dissolute priesthood. This was the period of the Inquisition, the rack, the thumb-screw. Autos-da-fé were kindled on all the hills. Men walked to the stake dressed in yellow gowns, wearing caps whereon were painted black devils. Queen Isabella was the patroness of the Inquisition. Torquemada was its high-priest. The ashes of Wycliffe were thrown upon the Avon, the Avon bore them to the Severn, and the Severn to the sea. The Church was shrouded in darkness. Nowhere had there been an open Bible or freedom to worship God.

The time had come for the opening up of the new world. The continent which God had been holding so long in reserve was now to offer a shelter to his oppressed people. The vine of Israel needed to be transplanted. The place was prepared where it might take deep root and fill the land, that the hills might be covered with the shadow of it. (Psa. 80: 8-11.)

In one of the visions of the Apocalypse a woman is seen clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars. With her child she is pursued by a great red dragon. She flees into the wilderness, "where she hath a place prepared of God." It is a parable of the Church of the Reformation,

guarding the pure gospel of Christ, pursued by the demon of persecution and finding shelter in the new world.

“ Westward the course of empire takes its way.  
The four first acts already past,  
A fifth shall close the drama with the day;  
Time’s noblest offspring is her last.”

II. *The man for the time.* It is proposed at this juncture to canonize Columbus, and there seems no good reason why a Church that has seriously discussed the canonization of Queen Isabella and Torquemada, patroness and bloody Father of the Inquisition, should hesitate to place Columbus in her calendar of saints. It is not my purpose to stand as *Advocatus Diaboli* to present objections to sainthood. That were to strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. It would be an easy matter to find fault with him, but at this juncture it is far better to dwell on the brighter side of his character. And there is much to be said in praise of his illustrious name. He was a man chosen as an instrument in divine providence to penetrate the mists that hid the unknown continent of the Western sea.

(1) I pay tribute to his faith. It had been brought to his notice that an oar had been picked up by a sailor on the waters near the Canaries, an oar marked with strange hieroglyphics. It had floated from the west. There was, then, a world out yonder. This was the basis of his creed. It was corroborated by Plato’s story of Atlantis, and by tales told by the Carthaginians of green islands in the west. A book called *Imago Mundi* is still extant, with annotations in the margin made by Columbus, and in which Roger Bacon expressed the opinion that it was not far from Spain to Asia. Two bodies had been seen out upon the open sea, strange-looking bodies

with bronzed faces such as were seen in India. The man put this and that together and said, Why may we not reach India by sailing into the west?

This was his creed, "India in the west." He believed it. A man with a creed is always a mighty man. According to thy faith be it unto thee. They are foolish folk who cry down creeds. *Credo* is a great word. Believe something if you would be anything. A man in the industrial world must have his creed, his five points as true and stubborn as the five points of Calvinism, to wit: honesty, industry, self-control, courage, and perseverance. A man must have his creed in political life. He must know what he believes as to tariff, the suffrage, and sound currency. And the line of belief here marks the difference between a demagogue and a statesman. A man must have his creed in social life.

"Whene'er you feel your honor grip,  
Let that aye be your border."

Why not also have a creed in religion? Faith is the basis of ethics. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. What do you hold as to the great verities? as to God, redemption, immortality, and judgment? Tell me and I will tell you what sort of a Christian you are. The whole life of Columbus was moulded by the revelation that came to him by that floating oar. "India in the west." It was half right, half wrong, but he wholly believed it. "If yonder," said he, "is the new world, I will find it."

(2) I pay tribute also to his persistence. He went to his townsmen of Genoa and told them how he proposed to find India by sailing to the west. "The man is crazy," said they. He found his way to the Spanish camp where Ferdinand and Isabella had marshalled their armies to



drive out the Moors. Vainly did he push his project there. No time had they nor treasure to expend upon an empty dream like that. Years passed. Friendless and poverty-stricken, he knocked at the door of the Convent of La Rabida to beg a crust and a cup of water for himself and his boy. To the Prior he imparted his project of reaching India by sailing to the west. Said Father Perez, "Possibly there may be something in it." Ageing and whitening, he found his way to the Council of Salamanca. There learned doctors and scientists gathered about him. Maps and charts were spread upon the table. "The earth is round," said he; "why may it not be circumnavigated?" But they answered, "If the earth is round, why do not the waters fall from the under side? And if the earth is round and you reached the antipodes, would not sailing home be like climbing a hill? If the earth is round, what about those Scriptures which tell how God stretched out the heavens like a pavilion?" No, no, the suggestion of heresy was here. The years pass on. He finds his way to the Alhambra. The Moors have been driven out. He begs again for royal patronage, but in vain. He is riding away with a sad heart when a voice calls and a hand beckons. He turns back. Isabella has changed her mind. "You shall have your fleet; I will pledge my jewels." His eighteen years of waiting are over. How the old man's heart must have leaped for joy! All things come round to him who will but wait.

What a lesson for faint hearts! Is there a man here who has faithfully pursued a project for years and years? Cheer up, friend; all things come round to him who will but wait. Are some of you discouraged because of your slow progress in the Christian life? Be of good courage. Line upon line, precept upon precept, makes character

at last. One step at a time, if only our faces are turned to the heavenly light, will bring us at last to heaven's gate.

(3) I pay tribute also to his courage, his indomitable courage. The eventful day has come. Three caravels, two of them undecked amid-ships, are swinging in the harbor of Palos, mere cockle-shells, of possibly a hundred tons' burthen, worm-eaten, and quite unseaworthy. And they are to sail out upon the unknown seas. The crew is disorderly. They would not sail but that they have been impressed to go. The canvas is set, the anchors are raised, the Prior of La Rabida lifts his hands in blessing. "Sail forth, O little fleet! Breathe upon the canvas, O breath of Jehovah! give a favorable voyage!"

Then fifty-seven days of monotonous voyaging. There are calms and gales, alternate hopes and disappointments, and mutterings among the crew. A broken mast floats by, memorial of some shipwreck, enough to awaken fears of mutiny. Here is seaweed floating on the water. A flock of paroquets flies past. There is land somewhere. One day the cry is raised at evening, Land! land! The next morning dispels the illusion; they are still out upon the open sea. At the bow stands Columbus looking out towards the west. Surely God has something for a man of courage like this.

It was on the twelfth of October, after the twilight had gathered, that, as he stood gazing westward, he saw a light, a flickering light. There are those who say it was a torch carried by a woman along the shore as a signal for her husband, returning after a day upon the sea in search of food for his little family. At two o'clock the next morning the gun was fired to signalize the end of the journey. At sunrise they make ready to disembark.



Yonder lies a green, sun-lit island. They land. Columbus kneels and takes possession in the name of Jesus Christ. The land reserved for centuries is found at last. San Salvador it is christened under the banner of the Cross. Land of the Saviour may it ever be! The light, the torch which was carried along the shore that night, has grown brighter and brighter ever since. It is uplifted to-day in the hand of Liberty—Liberty Enlightening the World.

God has a similar reward for every courageous man. It is the old story of the quest for the Golden Fleece, the search for the Holy Grail. It is the story told over and over again in every passing age of the sailing forth in discovery of truth. God has no San Salvador for stay-at-homes. He who borrows his dogmas from the symbols of the Fathers, who is satisfied with what heredity and environment have given him, will never come into possession of truth. Revelations are for those who sail between the Pillars of Hercules. You want to know about the great solemnities: sail out into the west. There are revelations of truth, priceless and incalculable, in the haze of the western seas. But in going out in quest of truth heed your Pilot, pay deference to the needle that points to the Pole-star, and unless you would be a wild rover of the seas, be obedient to your chart, the blessed Bible, the revealed Word of God.

### III. *The man's Master.* Who piloted the fleet?

At this point we note a signal providence. The land-breezes, the floating seaweed, and other tokens of not far-distant land had moved the crew to earnestly implore their captain to change his course; but he persisted. He believed that India lay to the west, and westward he sailed on. At length, however, a thorn-bush floated by

with berries on. Its direction suggested that land lay to the southwest, and yielding to the persistent entreaties of his men, he changed the course of his fleet that way ; and thereby he changed the course of history. Had he sailed to the westward he would have landed on the coast of Florida, and the continent would have fallen in the hands of the Spaniards. As it was he landed on San Salvador. Columbus never set foot upon the soil of what is now the United States of America. Had he taken possession of the mainland in the name of Ferdinand and Isabella, our land would have been doomed to a Spanish civilization and all its attendant horrors. What those would have been may be plainly seen from the condition of Spain itself, Mexico, and the South American Republics. It was a hairbreadth escape. Columbus was indeed the Admiral of the fleet, but the Sovereign God was at the helm. He conducted the great navigator near enough to the continent, but not too near—near enough for the uses of discovery, but not near enough for settlement. Columbus died in utter ignorance of the true nature of his discovery. He supposed he had found India, but never knew how strangely God had used him.

The mainland of America lay practically unsettled for more than one hundred years. In this interval strange things happened. The Church was rent asunder. The Unreformed and the Reformed branches set out upon divergent paths. Luther nailed his ninety-five theses to the door of the Castle Church and sent the echoes of the Reformation reverberating around the world. Shakespeare lived ; Galileo lived. The great Armada was wrecked. The bells tolled out the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The Duke of Alva hurled the forces of the Inquisition vainly against the dykes of Holland. That was a won-

derful century, and all the while God was manifestly preparing for the settlement of the new world. It could not occur until he spoke. In vain did the Papal nations seek to possess it. De Mont sailed up and down the New England coast, but the savages kept him off. The decree had gone forth; this was to be a Protestant land. It was to be a shelter for the woman and her child. The Red Dragon could not possess it. At length the time was come—1620—*Annus mirabilis!*

Then they came, the sifted peoples of the old world, the stuff that heroes are made of, Puritans from Old England who had resisted the fires of Smithfield, Huguenots from France, who had heard from their fathers about St. Bartholomew's Day, the "beggars" of Holland, racked with fierce struggle against tyranny, the Covenanters of old Scotland from their conventicles among the hills. That migration to the new world was the most momentous the world had known since Abraham departed out of the land of the Chaldees into a country that he knew not of. God had fanned the threshing-floor of all Europe to find this wheat for the planting of America. This was the land whereon the ultimate problem of civilization and ecclesiastical freedom was to be brought to a glorious consummation. Men of independence, integrity, intelligence, industry, courage, and broad-mindedness, men schooled by flame and scourge, men who hated oppression and believed in human rights, were needed for it. Poor, but independent, not frilled and powdered, but armed mightily with the sword of the Spirit, and with purpose of freedom pulsating at the very centres of their hearts—these were the men whom God had chosen for the settlement of this land. For a hundred years he had kept the new world waiting until they should be ready to possess it.

This delay meant everything for us. It meant,

(1.) Freedom. In all probability there would have been no semblance of freedom had Columbus colonized the mainland. Not one of the nations springing from Spanish conquest and fostered under the pretensions of the Papal See has enjoyed the rights and privileges of popular government. In the cabin of the "Mayflower," in mid-ocean, a constitution of the new settlement was drawn up, its opening words—"In the name of God, Amen," and its closing words—"In the name of God, Amen." That instrument was adopted and John Carver was elected, by ballot, Governor. This was the formal birth of the elective franchise as we enjoy it. Out of that conference on the high seas were born the liberty, equality, and fraternity of the new world.

(2.) It meant Intelligence. To this, Catholic domination has been invariably fatal. If Rome could have its way at this moment, our free school system would be blotted out of existence. It is a notable fact that the three nations who effected the original settlement of America, the Dutch, the Puritans, and the Scotch, are the three contestants for the honor of originating our system of popular education. At the same time its only avowed and recognized enemy is the Romish Church. There is no menace anywhere to this fundamental element of our American institutions save as we find it among the followers of Leo XIII. The free school is an Anglo-Saxon product, and we firmly believe that God who drove back the Catholic Spaniards from our shore will not allow the same pernicious influence to destroy the institutions planted here.

(3.) It means, furthermore, a Pure Gospel. We have in America an open Bible and a supreme Christ. Colum-

bus sailed in the "Santa Maria" and prefaced the report of his discovery with the words *Jesu cum Maria*. But the civilization of America is like the luminous cloud which gathered on the Mount of Transfiguration, of which it is written that all human figures vanished; "they saw no man save Jesus only." An open Bible, a preëminent Christ, and the right of every man to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience—these are the shibboleths of our religious freedom. It has pleased God to guard our land from the oppression and superstition which have made Romanism a hissing and a byword among the nations of the earth.

So God piloted the fleet. The great discoverer, with all his heroic virtues, did not know whither he went. "He sailed for the back door of Asia and landed at the front door of America, and knew it not." He never settled the continent. Thus far and no farther, said the Lord. His providence was over all.

A great inheritance has been committed to us. God sent his people, in the olden time, to a land which was set apart by sea and desert and mountain from all the surrounding world, and they were recreant to their trust. They disregarded his Sabbaths, they kindled fires to alien gods, and their land with all its fertile acres and fair estates became a dwelling-place for the owl and the bittern. Oh let us be true to the obligations of our great inheritance! God expects great things of us. He hath not dealt so with any nation. John Foster says, "Power to its last atom is responsibility." God has given us broad acres and inexhaustible mines of treasure. Power means responsibility. And God has given us civil and ecclesiastical freedom, and with it he has laid a mighty burden of responsibility upon us.

## THE SOUL'S MOORINGS.

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"And God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a High-Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Heb. 6:17-20.

THE Hebrew lad who stood upon the piers of Tarsus and watched the white-winged ships sailing in from the Mediterranean—who saw from afar the gladness on the weather-beaten faces of the crews as they furled their canvas and dropped anchor in the harbor of their Cilician home—who looked out over the waters many a time and dreamed dreams and saw visions of storm and dismal wreck, men clinging to floating spars, white faces amid the foam, mists hiding sun and heavens and shore—now grown to manhood and familiar with cares and ambitions and the heart-aches of an earnest life, calls back his memories of the sea. His soul is as a ship far out upon the waters, freighted with hopes and purposes, beaten by storms and swayed by tides, yet kept securely in the hollow of His hand who rules tides and tempests alike, and ever sailing on towards the harbor of that city which hath foundations, whose founder and maker is God.

Blow, ye favoring gales! shine, thou benignant sun!



till we, like that Tarsian saint, shall all have reached our haven of rest !

A ship without an anchor is at the mercy of the elements. The chart, the rudder, the well-filled sails, are sufficient for bright days and calm waters ; but when the mists are gathered, the canvas whipped into shreds by angry winds, the shattered hulk tossed like a feather and drifting helplessly towards the lee shore with its white line of angry breakers—what now, Master of the ship ? Let down the anchor !

“ I see the good ship riding all in the perilous road,  
The low reef roaring on her lee, the roll of ocean poured  
From stem to stern, sea after sea ; the mainmast by the board,  
The bulwarks down, the rudder gone, the boats stove at the  
chains ;  
But courage still, brave mariners, the bower still remains ! ”

As the bower-anchor is to a ship so is the hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ to an earnest man. It maketh not ashamed. It never disappoints. In treacherous calms, when the tides of habit are tugging at the soul, as well as in fierce tempests of trial, it has a sure and steadfast grip on the power of God.

I. Observe, *this hope entereth into that within the veil*. The ark of the covenant with the luminous cloud, the token of God's visible presence, was behind the fine-twined curtain within the Holiest of All. In like manner there is a veil dividing between the things which lie within the province of the senses and the unseen things which are most real and eternal.

Alas for the agnostic, the man who believes only what lies within the reach of his finger-tips, the man to whom the great solemnities are all as empty dreams ! My dog is an agnostic. Stand up, Fido, and let me reason with

thee! Dost thou believe in God? Dost thou believe in life and immortality? His patient eyes are saying as plainly as August Comte or Herbert Spencer, "*Agnosco*, I know not! These things are beyond my sphere of comprehension. Bid me gnaw a bone or chase a pheasant. The things which are unseen are too hard for me."

Oh, blessed be God, we who are made in his likeness can by faith apprehend the things which are invisible, the sublime verities which fleshly eyes cannot see and hands cannot handle, the eternal, substantial things which will endure when gold and laurel wreaths and thrones and monuments shall have vanished into nothingness! The sublimities and profundities lie within the veil.

*God is there.* Our hope takes hold of him. We need no argument as to the existence of the Divine Being; we know it by the tugging of the anchor-chain. How lonely the life of one who holds no communion with Him! he dwells alone, like a man in a dungeon. Oh to feel the touch of a living hand! The soul needs Him, and intuitively reaches after Him, but the sure and steadfast hope of the Christian lays hold upon Him as the flukes of the anchor grip the everlasting rock.

*The truth of immortality, also, is within the veil.* Nature yields no conclusive proof of it. If a man die will he live again? Ay! Else whence these "precious hopes, these fond desires, these longings after immortality?" But better than all intimations is this strong tugging at the anchor-chain. The heart feels it and cries, I shall live and not die!

*The assurance of infinite mercy is within the veil.* The senses cannot grasp it. We stand this side and hear no voice from beyond. Love and justice are ever at strife. We lift the veil; lo! the cover of the ark is



sprinkled with blood! God is love. The truth, Christ crucified, which to the wisdom of this world is foolishness, thus becomes to us the very wisdom and power of God.

II. Observe, again, *our hope is sure and steadfast, being confirmed by two immutable things*. We want a trustworthy hope, the interests involved are so vast and momentous. The hope of the hypocrite shall perish, it shall be cut off; his hope is as a spider's web: "He shall lean upon it, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure." The cunning architect builds his beautiful fabric in kings' houses, a masterpiece of cunning; but in the morning the housemaid with a whisk of her broom sweeps it away. Such is the hope based on mere feeling or on empty ceremony or on a fallacious view of the divine goodness or on a formal connection with the church of God. But the sure hope of the believer is held by a double cable, two immutable strands of assurance twisted together, in both of which it is impossible for God to lie.

(1.) *His word*. "He hath not left us to spell out our privilege." The Bible sparkles with promises, exceeding great and precious, as the heavens above with stars. "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."

(2.) *His oath*. As if his word were not enough, he confirms it with an oath; and because he can swear by no

greater, he sweareth by himself: As I live, saith the Lord! Now and then men say flippantly, "Upon my life!" How trivial an asseveration! A man's life is in his nostrils. And how little a matter whether he goes or stays. But here is a tremendous oath: As I live, saith the Lord! In this is the assurance of our hope. He liveth. What if an angel were to appear in mid-heaven announcing with a trumpet-blast, God is dead! What obsequies there would be! What sighing among the forests! What groanings among the tossing seas! What sackcloth on the heavens! What a panic in the heavenly host! How the everlasting hills would go reeling and staggering back to chaos, back to nothingness! Such a calamity however is unthinkable. God liveth, ever liveth, from everlasting to everlasting, source and centre of all natural and spiritual life. Every bird is singing it, every star is telling it, every brook is murmuring it, all nature is resonant with it. I AM THAT I AM. And because he liveth, we shall live also. Thus doth God secure our hope with a double cable, and the anchor holds.

III. Observe, furthermore, "*we have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*" A strong consolation, a glorious impetus, an inspiration. As the mainspring keeps the entire mechanism of the chronometer in normal action, so does the living hope of the believer direct and control his entire life.

He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself. A hope is futile unless it is vitally interwoven with character. I ask, Are you saved? You answer, I have a hope. Thus too often the hope is a mere certificate of character which may be produced upon occasion. You may have gone through a train at midnight and have seen the pas-

sengers trying, in strained positions, to catch a little slumber—here an emigrant, weary with long journeying, there a mother fallen asleep with a child upon her lap. The door opened and the conductor passed through calling, "Tickets, please!" They awoke and rubbed their eyes, produced their tickets, and settled back again to sleep. The Lord deliver us from a Christian hope like that! It must be interwoven with our life. It must brighten our eyes and strengthen our arms and nerve our hearts for right living. It must make us kinder at home, more honest in business, more courteous in social life. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

And more: our hope must lead us on to Christian endeavor. It must sing to us like a sweet-voiced sister while we are climbing the steep paths. It must urge us on to participate in the great work of universal deliverance, it must save us from spiritual melancholia.

"Your harps, ye trembling saints,  
Down from the willows take;  
Loud to the praise of love divine  
Bid every string awake."

Strong consolation, exhilarating courage, glorious incentive, splendid inspiration—this must be the outcome of a genuine hope of eternal life in Christ.

IV. Once more observe, *the secret of the efficiency of this hope is in Jesus Christ*. "It entereth into that within the veil whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus made a High-Priest for ever." Of all the living verities which are within the veil none is comparable with Christ himself. He is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto him.

Here is a reference to the great Day of Atonement when the High-Priest passed within the veil, not without blood, to make expiation for the people's sin. It was a solemn hour while they waited without. On the success of his mediatorial errand their life depended. And when at last—the blood sprinkled, the prayer offered, the answer given—he came forth into the midst of the camp, his face illuminated with a smile of heavenly acceptance, with what joy did they welcome him!

So hath Christ as our forerunner entered into the Holiest of All where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. "Up to the high hills we look, whither he hath gone and whence cometh our help." Our hope is fixed upon him. It is not our hope that saves, but He himself. Let not men have confidence in the saving power of hope; as well let them expect to board the anchor instead of the ship for a voyage to Liverpool. It is faith that saves, and faith only, as the cable that fastens the soul to Jesus. As one of the fathers has said, "We are saved by our grip on the blood."

The soul needs this sustaining strength of Christian hope not only in stormy seas when the waves and the billows are passing over it, but in the routine of daily life. The quietness of our still days is all illusory. There is nothing common-place in human experience. There are no uneventful days. Every moment from sunrise to sunset has its Sibylline books. The most monotonous life, if we could read it aright, is a struggle, a romance concealing in its even flow the plot of an everlasting drama. Never does the ship find better use for its anchor than in the breathless calm that foretokens the mighty wind; never more than when the placid surface hides the treacherous tides which drag us towards the hidden rocks. More

souls are wrecked by the under-currents of habit than by fierce Euroclydons of trial. How easy to drift, to sweep around the swirling circle of custom or popular opinion to its devouring centre. "Be not conformed unto this world." Let your hope hold you to truth and righteousness like an anchor, sure and steadfast. This is the Christian life—to be in the world but not of it—sailing upon its waters yet not circling upon its whirlpools or drifting with its tides.

But oh! when the rains descend and the floods come and the winds blow, then the staunchest ship must have an anchor if she would go unshattered through the storm! Trial is the conclusive test of character. Here is a merchant who has borne the reputation of an honest man all these years. Time has dealt kindly with him; he has gathered a competency and in the race for riches has never brought reproach upon his name. He did run well; who did hinder him?

Suddenly the trial comes; the cords of financial stringency are tightening around him; his life-long dreams of prosperity are succeeded by a nightmare of impending ruin. Now let him look to his integrity. Will it hold amid the storm? A nervous stroke of the pen, a false entry, a forged signature, and the emergency is over. But alas! the ship has foundered. The virtues of the best moral character, if its morality is not upheld by the firm supports of religion, are but as ropes of sand when the winds are blowing from the north. We speak of common honesty, common morality; but what we want is uncommon honesty, an heroic morality, an integrity held as by a mighty anchor-chain to the very heart of God.

This is the believer's safety. He is guarded by Omnipotence, the everlasting arms are under him; the sure

word of promise is his, "I will never leave thee, the river shall not overflow thee, the flames shall not kindle against thee." "He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." Being in vital union with God, we are as safe as God himself. "Fear not," said Cæsar to his boatman who grew pale when the little craft was shaken by the billows, "fear not; thou canst not sink; thou carriest great Cæsar and his fortunes with thee."

Oh, believer, fear not; the Word of the Lord hath spoken it, "I am with thee; be not dismayed. I will hold thee, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." So for all the vicissitudes of life this hope is commended to you, a hope that will serve in treacherous calms as well as in the sudden storms of life, a hope that will secure the soul amid the gathering darkness of life's close and in the dazzling light of judgment. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus how he said, "Come unto me and I will give you rest"—rest from pain, rest in the ark when the waters of the great deep are broken up and the roar of the surge is mingled with the cries of the dying and despairing—a rest which this world can neither give nor take away—"rest eternal, sacred, sure."



## THE CHILDREN IN THE MARKET-PLACE.

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"But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But Wisdom is justified of her children." Matt. 11:16-19.

IN the problem of history the one constant factor is human nature. One generation passes away and another takes its place with the regularity of ebbing and flowing tides; but the calm current of heredity flows on for ever. The dispositions of the fathers are ever being handed down to their posterity. You could not understand why the child recently born into your family has blue eyes. They could not be traced to parents or grandparents. You may however remember among the family portraits a blue-eyed ancestress who lived far back in colonial times. The family resemblance of the race is preserved in this way. So when the Lord said, "Unto whom shall I liken this generation?" he spoke with no transient significance. The lesson of his discourse was in the nature of a general truth. It was not more for the people of that time than for us.

The great Preacher, as was his wont, found in one of the familiar happenings of common life an illustration of

a great spiritual truth. A group of lads at play, acting now a mock marriage and again a mock funeral, complain that certain of their comrades will not participate in their games: "We have piped unto you and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you and ye have not lamented." So, says the Teacher, in our broader and more earnest life it is impossible to please the whims and humors of those around us.

But "Wisdom is justified of her children." Thank God for that! The understanding of the wise is open to the truth. There are always some who are able to see the reason and rightness of things.

I. Let us apply this principle *to the Scriptures*.

The Bible is a severe and heroic paradox. It is the two-fold expression of a great religious system. To this fact must be attributed much of the opposition which it encounters and most of the criticisms which are urged against it.

The Old Testament opens with the story of the Fall and the awful penalty passed upon sin: "The soul that sinneth it shall die." In the midst of its ceremonial stands an altar streaming with blood, a tribute at once to Retributive Justice and to Redeeming Grace, an announcement of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, a prophecy of Christ and him crucified. But through all and over all the laws and appointments of the Old Economy we detect the glow of the flaming mountain and the sound of the trumpet waxing louder and louder, until its inspired annals close with the admonition, "Lest He come and smite the earth with a curse!"

How does all this commend itself to the children in the market-place? Not at all. It is quite too sombre. The cry, "Repent ye," is abhorrent to them. To fall in with



its requirements would be like keeping step to the Dead March in "Saul." They will have it that "God is Love."

Well, then, how fares the New Testament with them? Here is a book whose every page is sunlit with divine love, beautiful with the ineffable virtues that shone in the face of Jesus Christ. It opens with the song, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men!" Here is the story of the marvellous Life; here are the discourses of One who spake as never man spake; here is the record of his merciful wonder-working. In the midst of this economy stands the Cross, the token of the divine overtures of mercy to guilty men. A voice cries, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth!" And this book of the heavenly grace, its first page vocal with the carol of angels, has its last illuminated with a benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!"

And how does this please the children of the market-place? Not in the least. The anthem of Free Grace is quite too cheerful for them. *Karma* is now their creed, the Law of Consequences: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." What virtue can there be, they inquire, in the shedding of innocent blood? Or what value in faith? The harps and timbrels of salvation are quite out of tune with their serious mood. They hold themselves peevishly aloof and will not dance.

Now blend these books of the two economies together into one Bible. How splendidly they blend! Mercy and Truth are here met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other! Out of this paradox of fire and blood comes the wondrous harmony of spiritual life. The children of the market-place must not, however, be expected to assent to this. The paradox is to them an irre-

concilable antagonism. The book is not a mosaic, but a conglomerate. Whether it offer a funeral dirge or an epithalamium, they decline in any case to respond to it.

But Wisdom is justified of her children. They mark how the old economy develops into the new as bud into blossom, as chrysalis into butterfly, as twilight into the gray of morning and then into the full splendor of day. The Old Dispensation and the New are the two halves of a pomegranate from the King's orchard; they are the warp and woof of one heavenly fabric. Justice and Grace are God's two eyes with which he looks towards the focus of salvation, are God's two hands with which he lifts the world into the glory of an endless life. Law and Gospel are the two hinges on which rolls back the opening door into the Father's house.

A rose-tree planted in Eden was nourished by Providence, cared for by angels, and watered by the tears of penitents, until—putting forth the verdure of hope through all the centuries—it blossomed at last on Calvary into a red, red rose.

II. Let us make a further application of this thought *to the Church*. Here is a body made up of all sorts of people having the common infirmities of the race. Not one among them is perfect. Every one of them must needs say, "I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I would like to be, nor yet what I hope to be, but by the grace of God I am what I am."

Here are many serious folk. The awfulness of sin has made a profound impression upon them. They have heard, ringing loud and clear from the mountain of the Law, the voice of Retributive Justice. They realize that the world is full of pain and remorse and shame, and that it will presently be set on fire. The Judgment, "that day

of wrath, that awful day," is ever before them. Life is a serious matter to such people and eternity is very nigh to them.

How do these commend themselves to the children of the market-place? Do their critics fall in with the slow measures of the *miserere*? Not they. Observe how their comments are interlarded with references to Chadband and Pecksniff and Praise-God Barebones.

But here are merry-hearted people, too. Once they sat by the highway-side, blind and friendless, and the Lord came that way saying, "Receive your sight!" And ever since they have been glorifying God. Why should they not? They live in a pleasant world; the skies are bright, the birds are singing, and heaven's blessing is over all. They have a good conscience too; for they have done what they believed to be right in their relations with God. The misspent past has been blotted out and heaven's gates are opened wide before them. So they go singing all the day.

And does this please the fault-finders? Not for a moment. They say, "If these people believed in the tremendous truths of their religion they could not be so merry." So whether we are lachrymose or cheerful, it is all one. We cannot please the children in the market-place. Now they cry "Aha!" and now "Oho!" They will neither lament nor dance to any music which we furnish for them.

What is the moral? Let us give little heed to the voice of the fault-finder, but endeavor with all our might to please God; "not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." He is our Lord. To him alone we stand or fall. The sum total of our duty, therefore, is to strive for

his approval, walking ever as under the great Taskmaster's eye.

There are some things which are pretty well established: (1.) *The church*, made up so heterogeneously of serious and gladsome people, *is not perfect*. To expect perfection in that quarter would betray a misapprehension as to the definition of the church. It is not a company of saints perfected, but of sinners saved by grace. It consists not of good people, but of people who desire to be good. The very reason of their banding themselves together is because they are sensible of weakness. They feel their need of mutual prayer and sympathy. They purpose to stand by one another and help one another in the spiritual life. It ought to be expected that their captious critics, professing self-dependence, should be more presentable outwardly than these. For they have strength enough of themselves to get along without this united prayer, this fellowship of kindred minds. (2.) *Nothing better than the church has been developed thus far*. This is evidenced by the involuntary tributes which are paid by outsiders to the life and character of church people. Not long ago a flaming headline appeared in one of our daily newspapers, "ANOTHER DEACON GONE WRONG." It was a case of embezzlement. Such cases are, alas, too common. But the fact that such headlines are ever seen is demonstration of the general opinion as to Christian life and character. Why do newspapers never fling out the headline "ANOTHER INFIDEL GONE WRONG"? Because in such case it is the expected that happens. There is nothing odd in the fact of an infidel going wrong, nothing sensational in that. The reporter does not care for it. The reason why the world cries out against an inconsistent church member is because it expects some-

thing better of him. The church contains the best people. No other organization since the foundation of the world has ever marshalled so glorious a company of upright men and women, living for the public weal and for the glory of God. (3.) *The church answers its purpose.* The children of Wisdom are agreed upon that. It helps men to escape from passions and evil habits. It helps men to build up character. It gives them noble employment in behalf of others. It encourages them to hope for brighter things as the days pass on.

The church is like the Spartan phalanx in which comrades were banded together by an oath of mutual devotion. They marched shoulder to shoulder with shields overlapped. They resolutely pushed their way to victory, bearing the wounded aloft upon their shields, until all found refuge in the citadel together. So are we presumed to stand by one another in this blessed fellowship of the church. The joints of our harness are pierced by many an arrow, but we push on, strengthened by our comradeship and confidently hoping to stand some bright day together in the great city of God.

III. The same thought has pertinence with respect to *Christ himself*. Why do the children in the marketplace so persistently find fault with him?

In the olden time a burgher, who was about to cast his ballot against Aristides the Just, was reasoned with by one who said, "What has Aristides done? Is he not a wise and patriotic citizen? Has he not devoted himself to the welfare of the State? Is he not the Just?" "Ay," said the burgher, as he dropped the black ballot into the urn, "ay, I hate him because he is the Just."

It is not difficult to see why men, from the standpoint of pure reason, should take exception to the Holy Scrip-

tures. It is easy to see how any who are so disposed may find fault with church members, imperfect as they are. But who shall lay anything to the charge of Jesus? The sublimest truths of our religion are but slightly apprehended and its precepts inadequately fulfilled in the best Christian life. But back of all our faults and above the company of his fallible disciples stands the Perfect One. There is no guile in his heart, no guile upon his lips.

In the life of the Saviour there are three episodes which have been the offence of the ages. *His Birth* contains the great mystery of the Incarnation. It was the most delightful thing that ever happened in human history. Not since the original creation had the sons of God so shouted for joy. But those who are disposed to find fault can find nothing in this glorious event to move them to participate in the merry-making of the children of God. *His Cross* is the symbol of the Atonement. It is a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, but to them who are saved the very wisdom and power of God. The death on Calvary was the very saddest thing that ever happened, and yet it opened the gateway into the world of eternal bliss. But whether the music of the gospel be a dirge or a wedding march, the children of the market-place decline to keep step with it. *The Open Sepulchre* tells of life and immortality. The earth was shrouded in gloom, but all heaven rejoiced when our Lord took captivity captive and ascended up on high. He hath for evermore at his girdle the keys of Death and of Hell.

In these incidents of the wonderful Life we note at once the strength and the weakness of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Its weakness is due to the perverseness of the human heart. But the children of Wis-



dom are strengthened by it with all might in the inner man.

There is an ever increasing multitude of such as see in Christ Jesus the chiefest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely. To them He is the very *unveiling of the person of God*. We cannot know God except as we make his acquaintance in Jesus Christ. In him the brightness of the noonday sun is adjusted to the sensitiveness of human eyes. He is also *the ideal man*, the only one who ever lived a perfect life. He is for all ages and generations the exemplar of character, without spot or blemish or any such thing, and worthy therefore to be called *par excellence* the Son of man. He is, moreover, a *Saviour*. No other has ever proposed to rescue a sin-stricken world from the bondage of sin; no other has ever claimed to avert the lifted sword of the broken Law.

While John Huss was in prison awaiting his execution he covered the walls of his cell with the name of Jesus. One night he dreamed that black devils obliterated it and went their way. But again a company of angels came and wrote the Name and its praises in letters of blood and colors of fire and said as they vanished, "Now let them efface it!" All along history the good Lord has been writing his wonderful gospel in ever deeper and more enduring characters. An innumerable company have risen up to call him blessed. His glory brightens with every rising sun. As Renan said, "All ages will proclaim that none has been born greater than Jesus among the children of men."

The reason why our Lord and Saviour is rejected is because men do not look him frankly in the face. Two travellers sat in a railway car discussing the character of



Christ. One said, "I think an interesting romance could be written about him." The other replied, "And you are just the man to write it. Set forth the correct view of Jesus. Tear down the prevailing sentiments as to his divineness. Paint him as he was, a glorious man." The suggestion was acted upon; the book was written. The man who made the suggestion was Robert G. Ingersoll; the book is Ben-Hur; the writer was Gen. Lew. Wallace. In the process of constructing the book he was required to study the life and character of Jesus and, as he studied, he was convinced of his divine personality. So must any man who will frankly look upon the face of the Nazarene be at last humbled before him, and forced to cry, "My Lord and my God!"

## LET US GO ON.

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“Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.” Heb. 6:1.

WE are fond of saying in these times that Christianity is a life. If by this we mean that Christianity is adverse or superior to dogma, the aphorism is perniciously false. But there is a definite sense in which it is true. Christianity is a doctrinal and ethical system abiding in the soul and expressing itself in walk and conversation. It is preëminently a living thing. It is a creed going about doing good.

The evidence of the life of Christianity is in its necessity of growth. All organic things are under the same law. A stone differs from a plant. The stone receives accretions from without; the plant is wrought upon and developed by an internal principle. Thus a man differs from a mummy. One wails in a mother's arms for a time, creeps, toddles, walks upon his feet, breaks from his leading-strings, and hurries over the threshold into youth, and from youth to vigorous manhood. But the mummy of old Rameses looks at you through the glass doors of the Boolak Museum just as it looked at the wailing mourners who carried it past the Pyramids to its burial four thousand years ago.

The man whose spiritual nature has come into contact with the supernatural Source and Centre of life is thrilled with a vital principle as really as if God had touched him with an electric spark. And thenceforth, by virtue of the

communication of that spiritual life, the necessity of unceasing growth is upon him.

This thought pervades the Scriptures. The Old Testament is full of it. Life is structural. The chiefest thing is edification—temple-building—the soul rising into a glorious fabric fit for the indwelling of the Spirit of God. The teachings of Christ are pervaded by it. The kingdom of heaven, that is, righteousness in the soul, is like the leaven which a woman put in three measures of meal, and behold the whole lump was leavened. And again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. The philosophy of St. Paul would be as dry as a summer heath without this thought, "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly."

So here. Paul is writing to the Diaspora, the Jews scattered abroad. They had been bound in the fetters of the ceremonial law and blinded by prejudice against the spiritual worship of the true God. Christ came with his wonder-working power and they arose in newness of life. Their chains were broken, their eyes were opened, the song of salvation thrilled on their lips. Just then came the great danger, the danger of standing still. The word of the apostle is like a trumpet-call: "Let us go on. Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection!"

By leaving the principles or *principia* he did not mean that they were to forsake, renounce, or forget them. Principles are never to be renounced. They were to leave

them as the plant leaves its root, piercing the crust of earth, seeking the sun's warmth, putting forth verdure, and blooming in beauty. They were to leave the principles of the gospel as the brook leaves the mountain spring, leaping from shelf to shelf, winding in and out to irrigate the growing fields, increasing in volume as it murmurs on, turning the wheels of industry, and bearing at length upon the majestic bosom of the river the commerce of the world.

What are these principles?

I. *Salvation.* The apostle entreats these people not to lay again the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith towards God. Repentance and faith are the negative and the positive side of salvation or deliverance from sin. With these begins the Christian life. But how many there are who linger here, spending weary hours in self-examination, doubting as to the validity of their hope, sadly questioning,

"Oft it causes anxious thought,  
Am I His or am I not?"

What fretting and worrying about "assurance"! I know of no assurance except the assurance of faith, and "faith is the evidence of things not seen." Our hope of salvation rests upon an absolute trust in God. He hath said, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." The secret of assurance is in taking him at his word. A sure cure for doubt and despondency is to get down upon one's knees and do there again the first works, surrendering instantly to Christ, instantly and unconditionally. Then arise and trust him. Do not keep pumping out the hold for ever. Stop the leak and sail on.

Salvation is more than mere deliverance from death. It is a great word and means, in its fulness, an entire con-

formity to God. Salvation means not repentance and faith only, but all the graces of character. Salvation means perfection. Wherefore the apostle says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Work it out, out to its uttermost results, out to its splendid fulfilment, out to its glorious consummation.

The old fathers of art, with scarcely an exception, did their best when working on the statues of their gods. One might carve a laughing child or a sporting satyr, but when he wrought his masterpiece he must needs get his model and his inspiration from the Olympiad—a Jupiter Tonans or a Venus rising from the sea. We also do our very best when copying, not human models, but the glorious Son of God. He is our Exemplar, and to imitate him is to be ever growing towards the full stature of a man. We soar highest when working out to its perfection the godlikeness which is implanted in us.

II. *Belief.* Our creed is one of those *principia* which we are to leave in going on unto perfection. At the beginning of the Christian life we receive certain fundamentals as true. They form the very basis of our profession: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty; I believe in Jesus Christ, who was born of a woman, crucified for me, and in his resurrection brought life and immortality to light; I believe in the Scriptures as the only infallible rule of faith and practice." In war times if a man breathed a word against the Constitution of the United States it was proof positive of disloyalty. He was in danger of Fort Lafayette. He was pointed at as he walked along the street. The man who questions the authority of the Scriptures, which are the constitution of the Christian life, has reason to investigate his loyalty. For in entering upon his Christian confession he professed to believe that the

court of last appeal in matters of faith and conduct is the Word of God.

These things are received as postulates; if they are not so received we have not really entered upon the Christian life at all. In fact, however, a multitude of us are all the while questioning as to the existence of God and the divine work of Jesus and the trustworthiness of the Scriptures, and so are "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."

O men and women, let us leave the rudiments and go on unto perfection! There are vast realms of truth before us, but we shall never explore them so long as we insist upon going around and around the old doctrines which in all good reason should have been settled at the outset. Multitudes of Christians are threshing old straw while the yellow sheaves of truth lie all about them untouched.

The troubles in the church as well as in the individual Christian life are largely due to this tedious discussion of long-settled truths. At this moment there is scarcely a denomination which is not fretted by logomachies as to baptism or the laying on of hands, or as to problems of eschatology or the inspiration of the Word. If young people were to pursue their education along such lines they would never get beyond b-a ba k-e-r ker, baker.

There was a time when Alfred Tennyson was a lad in bib and tucker and played with alphabet-blocks as other lads do, building bridges and forts and cathedrals; but as time passed the larger tasks of life summoned him. He left his alphabet, not renouncing it, but passing on to the practical uses and applications of it. His A, B, C grew into the "Idylls of the King" and "In Memoriam." When the supreme moment came it would have been a strange thing if the Laureate, dying there in the moonlight,



had still been fumbling his building-blocks. But no, he died with great thoughts in his brain and the open page of "Cymbeline" before him. "When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things."

The time for us to determine upon the fundamentals is when we stand upon the threshold. That crossed, we pass on to ulterior conquests in the realm of spiritual and eternal truth. *Ne Plus Ultra* was the legend on the Pillars of Hercules. *Ne plus ultra?* Nay, rather—*Plus Ultra* for ever and ever. There is always more beyond. The beyond is the illimitable. Let us not go cruising around the fringes of the Mediterranean, but turn our prows towards the Pillars of Hercules and sail out towards the west.

III. *Duty*. The rudimental questions of ethics are among these principles which we are to leave in order that we may go on unto perfection. There are three rules of conduct which are settled at the beginning of the Christian life. These are :

(1.) I must do nothing knowingly to offend God.

(2.) I must do nothing to wrong myself.

(3.) I must do nothing that will be an occasion of stumbling for my fellow-men.

These are the touchstones by which we determine most of the questions that arise in common life. How much of our time and energy are spent in simple questions of casuistry which these rules should determine in the twinkling of an eye—questions as to certain darling sins, old habits, eating and drinking, and as to the rhythmical movements of our nether limbs. A jeweller's clerk who has served his apprenticeship long enough to tell gold from pinchbeck at



a glance needs not get down his acid-bottle every time a customer brings in a brooch or earring. The question settles itself in an instant when he sees it. So should our common questions of conscience, and so would they if we had not fallen into the habit of trifling with them.

Oh let us go on! let us leave the principles and go on unto perfection. Life is too large and momentous to be spent in such small questionings. The growing boy outgrows his clothes. The best proof that a man is advancing in the spiritual life is that he has gotten beyond the routine of small scruples and has entered upon the more earnest responsibilities of the kingdom of God.

Duty is the great matter. Duty is the sum total of Christian service. Duty is ethical purpose in perfection. Let us go on unto it. When Saul of Tarsus asked of the Lord, "What wilt thou have me to do?" he did not mean, "May I visit the stadium exhibitions as I have been accustomed to do? May I mingle in the Isthmian games? May I continue to be a Jewish zealot haling Christians to judgment and death?" These things had all been instantly disposed of. What he meant was, "In the new world of usefulness, which this sun-burst of heaven has opened before me, where wilt thou have me to go, Lord, and what shall I do?"

To be for ever engaged in the round of ethical questionings as to the right and the wrong of the small affairs of life is a task as fruitless as that of the Danaïdes, who were doomed to draw water from a deep well and fill an immense sieve with it. This is the pain of minimum piety which keeps us for ever doing the same things over and over with nothing to show for it. O beloved, let us go on to the larger tasks of the kingdom of God. Duty is, to do with truth and righteousness whatever, in the

providence of God, is laid upon us. The world lieth in darkness; go thou with a flaming torch and help to illuminate it! The fields are yellow unto the harvest; thrust in thy sickle and reap! Souls are waiting to be saved; go thou and bring them back to God!

A few words of closing counsel.

*First.* Begin. There is no growth in life unless you have gotten hold of the principles. You must leave them to seek things beyond. The difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is the difference between a man plodding to Jerusalem with staff in hand and another man who hopes to go to Jerusalem but who has not started out.

*Second.* Be ambitious to make the most of yourself, to do the most for God. We have only one life here; let us realize the utmost possibilities of it. The children of Israel might have gone straight from Egypt into the promised land, but alas, they were hindered by their sins and murmurings, and went round and round by the way of the wilderness for forty long years. So we go lusting for quails and making golden calves for ourselves and dancing around them. Canaan is just yonder. I hear the rushing flood of Jordan. I see the palm-trees waving on the farther shore. Let us hasten on and possess the land.

*Third.* Do not be discouraged. Rome was not built in a day. Character is a slow growth. He that believeth shall not make haste. Digging up a newly planted bulb is not going to hasten the blooming of the lily. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. The day does not break instantly. A beam—an arrow of light shooting aloft—a deepening glow—the lifting of darkness like the lifting of a veil, the stars vanishing one by one

like quenched candles—the scattering of shadows like panic-stricken ghosts—the clouds changing from black to gray, from gray to amber, from amber to glorious crimson, from crimson to burning gold—the red dawn creeping upward like a flush over a human face—the woodman's axe ringing from the forest on yonder hill—the smoke rising from the chimney in the meadow beneath—the dew sparkling on the grass—the flowers swinging their censers—the birds singing—sounds of busy life coming from afar—at last, at last, the world is awake! So is the progress of righteousness in the soul—it shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

And then, passing through the gates of heaven we shall still be going on, going on to larger measures of perfection in truth and character. There is no solstice there. “We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

LET US GO ON!

## A SENSATIONAL GOSPEL.

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"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." 1 Cor. 1:21.

IN the divine economy it has been determined that preaching—the foolishness of preaching—should be the instrument for the conversion of the world. Why not the sword? Because God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. When earthly kings resolve on conquest we hear the marshalling of the hosts, the sound of the hammer in the ship-yards, the trumpet-blast. But when God goeth forth, conquering and to conquer, he gathers around him a company of fishermen and other humble folk and bids them go armed only with the "Sword of the Spirit" which is the Word of God.

When Jesus stood in the midst of his little group of followers, none of them rich or learned or influential, and said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," princes and priests did not tremble, for none dreamed that in the fulfilment of that prophetic command all thrones and oracles should be overturned and the cords of the tabernacle of Jesus should be extended from the river to the ends of the earth. Yet so it is. This foolishness of preaching is in reality the very wisdom and power of God. The truths of the gospel rightly presented must of necessity find their way to heart and conscience. What need of adventitious helps or resorts to sensationalism, so called, save to that which rests in the intrinsic power of the truth? They are ruled out.

*First, sensational themes ;* that is, such as have no immediate bearing on the soul's eternal welfare.

*Second, sensational methods,* the methods of a mitred mountebank who

“Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven  
As make the angels weep.”

*Third, the sensationalism of mere rhetoric ;* choice words, rounded periods with no practical helpfulness in them, no message from the Throne.

“Water, water, everywhere!  
And all the boards did shrink.  
Water, water, everywhere,  
And not a drop to drink !”

*Fourth, the sensationalism of heresy.* The cheapest popularity in these times is to be won by repudiating the symbols which were solemnly espoused in the ordination vow. The crowd runs together to see a man strike his mother church in the breast. A breach of common honesty in the pulpit will win immediate applause from those who are not in cordial sympathy with truth and righteousness. But the man who resorts to this sensational device is neither a worthy minister nor an honest man.

The gospel is in itself sensational to the last degree, if it be worthily preached. Its truths are tremendous in their import and take hold upon the innermost fibres of the soul. Dulness in the pulpit is intolerable. It can only be accounted for on the assumption that the preacher has not apprehended his theme. “Why is it,” said a clergyman to David Garrick, “that you draw the multitudes while I preach to empty pews?” “Because,” replied the actor, “I set forth fiction as if it were true, while you preach the truth as if it were fiction.” We in the

ministry need to be more and more drenched by the reality of gospel truth. When the saintly Summerfield was dying he said, "Oh! now if I could return to my pulpit but for an hour, how I could preach, for I have looked into eternity!" Would that God might give us clear eyes to see those things which, being unseen, are most real and eternal. How then could we preach! No need then of the vanity of adventitious helps. We should then be able to set forth burning thoughts in breathing words and bring our people face to face with the solemnities and profundities of the gospel of Christ. In our seminary course we theological students were taught to divide truth under three heads, to wit: Theology, Anthropology, Soteriology. These comprehended the sum and substance of the Christian System. Each of these divisions of doctrine has in it such possibilities of interest and conviction that we who preach them are without excuse if they do not find their way to the centre of the hearts of men.

I. *Theology*, i. e., the science of God.

God!! a great word. A word of three letters only, but of infinite dimensions; easy to say, but how difficult to apprehend! "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Our work is to bring him near to the hearts and consciences of the people, to make God real. It is ours to declare the contents of the Name.

(1.) *God essential*. Try to define him. Here is the best definition that ever was formulated: "God is a Spirit (what is spirit?), infinite (what is infinitude?), eternal (eternity!), unchangeable (how can we grasp immutability?), in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." We attempt to simplify the great mystery, and lo, a new mystery is contained in every word. Turn your telescope towards the farthest nebula in infinite



space, and lo, from far yonder comes back the word, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Turn your microscope upon the last reduction of life, protoplasm, primordial germ, and out of that comes a faint whisper, "Canst thou by searching find out God?"

(2.) *God personal.* It is ours to bring God near to the people. Sir John Franklin relates that when trying to persuade a tribe of Esquimaux of the divine presence and interest, the chief answered him, "There may be a God, but he surely knows nothing about us. Behold our poverty, our rude homes, our tattered garments! Behold yon icy crags! There may be such a being as you mention; but if so, he is surely afar off." It devolves upon us to let the people know that our God is a real personality, with eyes to see our pain and sorrow, with a heart to pity and mighty arms to help.

(3.) *God paternal.* It was observed by Madame de Gasparin that if Jesus had done nothing in his earthly ministry but to teach men how to say "Our Father, which art in heaven," that would have been abundant compensation for the vast outlay involved in his dwelling among men.

Thus to declare the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable One is surely a work that should enlist our utmost enthusiasm and insure us against the least possibility of dullness. Ours is the glorious work to help the people to find God and apprehend him. Do you remember Moses' "call to the ministry" and how it came to him? He was out in the wilderness of Horeb, a fugitive from his people and from duty. While following Jethro's flocks amid the solitudes he saw an acacia-bush on fire. He drew nigh, wondering. The flames leaped through the bush, yet not a leaf was shrivelled, not a twig was burned! As he won-



dered a voice said, "Draw not hither; put off thy sandals; the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." He reverently bowed his head; it had come at last, "I am the God of thy fathers." He was afraid to look or to utter a word. "I am come down to deliver my people. Come now, I will send thee." "Who am I," he cried, "that I should go?" "I will be with thee." "What is thy name?" "Go say unto them, Jehovah (I Am That I Am) hath sent thee unto them." This was his call.

He went. He gathered the elders and told them about Jehovah. He assembled the people, and with signs and wonders showed them that Jehovah is God. He made his way to the Egyptian court and presented his demand: "Thus saith Jehovah, Let my people go." And Pharaoh replied with a derisive smile, "Jehovah? I know Isis, I know Osiris, I know all the gods of Egypt; but who, pray, is this Jehovah?" And Moses said, "I will declare him unto thee. Thou believest in the Nile-god, in the holy Scarabæus, in the Frog-headed One, in Apis, in the divine Leek, in all forms of adorable life; but Jehovah will prove himself the master of all the gods." He waved his rod, and the Nile was a rolling torrent of blood; he waved again, and frogs came up from the water-side into their ovens, their kneading-troughs, their bed-chambers. Once more, and the air was full of gnats and beetles. They should have enough of holy Scarabæus! Again, and a murrain fell upon the cattle; lo, Apis was put to shame! Again, and destruction rained down upon fields of wheat and the gardens of leeks and onions. Yet once more, and the homes of Egypt sent forth a mighty wail for the dead. "I Am That I Am" thus proved himself Lord of Life and of Death. At last Pharaoh bowed his head, convinced that Jehovah alone is God.

This too is our commission, to let rulers and people know that Jehovah reigns and will have his way among the children of men.

II. *Anthropology*, that is, the science of man.

We do not know ourselves. It is a true saying, "The proper study of mankind is man." It devolves upon us to make the people see themselves, not "as others see them," but as they are and as they appear in the clear sight of God. In so doing we shall find ourselves at no loss for material to enchain the attention. There is no room for dulness here.

(1.) We are to throw upon the canvas the picture of man as God created him. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul. He made him a little lower than God. Here he is under the trees of Paradise, his heart full of happiness, conscience clear as the sunlight; he walks with God in the cool of the day. He has kingly dominion over all the creatures. What a splendid heritage is his! What a glorious outlook is before him!

(2.) We are to throw upon the canvas another picture—of man exiled from Paradise, sent out into a wilderness of toil and sorrow, his head fallen on his breast, his heart full of shame, his conscience smitten with remorse, tottering on towards the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Man, lost and ruined; on his brow one word, *Ichabod*—the glory hath departed!

(3.) We are to throw upon the canvas another picture—a spectre black as midnight—Sin.

It was sin that wrought the awful calamity. Sin has dug every grave. Sin has unsheathed every sword that has ever been flashed upon a battlefield. Sin has desola-

ted homes, corrupted social life, and ruined governments. Sin bloats the face of youth and scars its beauty with foul traces of lust and inebriety. Sin dethrones the proudest intellects and sets the maddened soul on fire of hell. Sin sharpened the dagger that pierced the heart of the Only Begotten Son of God.

It is easy to preach smooth things. The multitudes demand them (Isa. 30:10), but we must turn not aside. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet and show the people their sin—sin, and death following after. Not sin in the abstract, not sin floating in the air like the breath of a pestilence or exhaling like miasma from the slums, but sin abiding in human hearts and making itself manifest in human lives—sin in you and in me.

So the call came to Nathan, "Go show David his sin." The king had committed a dreadful offence. He had murdered Uriah and taken Bathsheba to wife. He had kept his crime in his own breast, but his soul was troubled. Over the blue skies, where once he loved to read the divine glory, was written—Murder! The winds that whistled round his palace shrieked—Adultery! In the watches of the night he saw in letters of fire on the dark walls of his chamber—Uriah! And when he knelt in prayer, voices called to him from the corners of his closet—Bathsheba! In the temple the hosannas and hallelujahs of the great choirs had an undertone like a wail of sorrow that reminded him of his dreadful sin.

The court preacher entered. After a respectful salutation he laid before the king a case for judgment, a trifling affair yet worthy of the royal attention. "A poor man had one little ewe lamb. It was dear as a daughter, ate of his food and drank of his cup. His rich neighbor

had many flocks and herds, but when his hospitality was needed he spared to take of his own possessions and seized upon the ewe lamb." Thus far when the king interrupted him, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die!" The moment has come. A sermon is a thrust. Draw thy blade, O prophet of the Lord! "Thou art the man!"

The iron enters into David's soul; he sees himself stripped of purple and ermine, a sinner before God. Up the winding stairway he staggers to his closet on the house-top, the face of Uriah staring into his—a cold, resolute, brave face. He bends in his closet, and from every nook and cranny the filmed eyes of the dead Uriah are gazing at him. He kneels—listen at his door: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight."

This is the tremendous fact which we are to declare to our people—we are all alike and there is no difference; we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. In our brain, our conscience, our heart, is the black plague-spot of sin.

To preach this as it ought to be preached is of necessity to touch men at the very core of their being. If we did but apprehend the truth in its reality we should preach it with such effect as was seen when Jonathan Edwards spoke of "sinners in the hands of an angry God," when men and women cried out in their anguish of conviction and clung for support to the pillars of the church. No need of adventitious helps to win attention. No room for

dulness here, if only we have ourselves realized the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Rom. 7:13.

III. *Soteriology*, i. e., the science of salvation. This is the third link in the gospel chain of reconciliation with God. The substance of the gospel is perfectly comprehended in three startling truths:

(1.) The *Incarnation*. Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifested in the flesh! We are to stand at the threshold of the stable in Bethlehem and bring to the knowledge of our people this wondrous adumbration of Deity. Here are heard the songs of angels, the laughter of children, the joy of those who have been groping for the Infinite. Here all the sons of God are shouting for joy. Who does not covet the privilege of him who stands here to usher sorrowing, bewildered souls into the presence of the enfleshéd God?

(2.). The *Atonement*. All souls are asking, "What shall we do to be saved?" All are desiring to know how man may be reconciled with God. We preach the redemptive glory of the cross. We cry, "Look, and live!"

A poor demented creature, a fisherman's wife, came to the minister with her hands full of wet sand, saying, "Do you see it? Oh my sins! as the sands of the sea-shore for multitude, as the sands of the sea-shore!" "Where did you get it?" said he. "Down by the beacon." "Go down by the beacon and put it there. Dig deep and pile up as high as ever you can. Wait until the tide rolls in." She went down by the beacon, heaped up the sand, and stood waiting. She watched the waves as they crept higher and higher until they swept over her sins, and she clapped her hands for joy. It was a pantomime of the glorious truth. Oh, beloved, the tide, the crimson tide,

rolls in! Here under the cross we preach the gospel of Redemptive Love. The tide rolls in; "It cleanseth me, it cleanseth me; oh praise the Lord, it cleanseth me!"

(3.) The *Resurrection*. Life and immortality are brought to light. The darkest night the world ever saw was when Jesus lay in his sepulchre. The Sun of Righteousness was eclipsed. But the brightest dawn was when he broke the bands of death and ascended up on high and took captivity captive. Here at the open sepulchre we stand pointing to the open heavens whither he has gone. Lo, yonder the keys of death and hell are at his girdle, and the seal of divine indorsement is put upon his mediatorial work. Here is comfort for all who mourn. Here is courage for all who tremble before the King of Terrors. Here is the triumph of heavenly grace. Why need I fear?

"The world recedes, it disappears;  
Heaven opens on mine eyes! Mine ears  
With sounds seraphic ring.  
Lend! lend your wings! I mount! I fly!  
O grave, where is thy victory?  
O death, where is thy sting?"

What splendid opportunities of enchaining the attention and capturing the hearts of men! We stand as did the sentinel upon the wall of Orleans when reinforcements came. The walls had been breached and shattered, the people were reduced to the last extremity. The old priest, Anianus, was praying in their midst. From the ramparts came the cry, "I see the rescue of the Lord!" It was only a cloud far yonder on the hills. Nearer and nearer it came. "I see the glistening of spears, I see the waving of the Gothic banners!" The cloud drew nearer from the distance; it was the squadron of Theodoric.



The people were saved. Oh, beloved, it is ours to stand upon the outer ramparts of death and announce the "Rescue of the Lord." The banners are waving, the shields of heaven aglow with the morning light, heaven is opened, hosannas and hallelujahs are all around us.

These are the glorious truths which we are commissioned to declare unto you. Pray for us that our lips may be touched with a live coal from the heavenly altar. (Isa. 6. 6.) Pray for us that our hearts may be filled with the glory of the truth. Pray for us that the vision of the burning bush may be vouchsafed to us. And pray for yourselves, beloved, that your hearts may be opened to receive the truth. For though we spake with the tongues of angels, yet our utterances would be vain unless the bolts were drawn and the doors opened to receive the message of truth. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Oh, Holy Ghost, come and prepare the way before the truth! Force its passage through barriers which sin has heaped up before it. Help us to hearken. Give us the hearing ear and the understanding heart. For if this everlasting gospel is true at all it is awfully, eternally, divinely true. So help us to receive it, for Jesus' sake. Amen.



## CHARACTER-BUILDING.

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” 1 Cor. 3:11-13.

IN my hand is a letter addressed by a college student to his mother, in which he says:

“I want your advice upon the comprehensive subject of character-building. I wish mine to be built right, but I fear I do not know how to go about it. It is not enough to avoid putting in poor material; the edifice cannot rise rapidly or well unless good material is put in. And I don’t know just what quarries to visit in search of this, nor, more important still, how to get it from the quarries and apply it to my needs. Perhaps it is because my needs are as yet rather vague and undefined, for I have never thought much on this matter until recently. What shall I do? Where shall I go?”

A youth who can write in this manner is surely not far from the kingdom of God. It is written of the young ruler who ran to prostrate himself before Jesus that he asked, “What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” and Jesus, beholding him, loved him. The heart of the Master ever goes out to an earnest young man. The world is so full of youth who are chasing thistle-down that one who seriously confronts the problems of eternal life is worthy of profound consideration. Nor could any question be of more serious import than this of character-building. “Where shall I go? and what shall I do?”

Our life is structural. That the apostle Paul so regarded it may be learned from his frequent use of the words edify and edification, the etymological meaning of which is "house-building." We are each building a house to dwell in—to dwell in for ever. Character is the enduring thing. "Thou delightest my heart," said the Emperor Augustus to Piso, who was rearing a splendid edifice of marble, "because thou art building as if Rome were eternal." We build for eternity. As the tree falleth, so shall it lie. As death leaves us, eternity finds us. Over the portal through which we pass out of probation into destiny is written, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; he that is righteous, let him be righteous still." So we build for eternity, for weal or woe, a thatched hut, fit only for bats and vermin to revel in, or a sanctuary that shall resound with hallelujahs.

St. Paul is writing to the Corinthians. Corinth was a city of striking contrasts, of vast wealth and sordid poverty. The abject multitudes dwelt in "ergastula," straw huts and hovels; but there were multitudes of palatial homes. The palace of the Proconsul was there, the Posidonium, or Temple of Neptune, and the magnificent theatre for the Isthmian games. So the people who dwelt in Corinth would understand the apostle's architectural figure, "we are building." We are building in our quietest hours; the still moments of our life have in them the plot of eternal dramas. Let us build well.

I. *As to the foundation.* Let us make no mistake here. It makes a vast difference what we build on. The Lord tells us of two shepherds who led their flocks down by the water courses and sought for a suitable place whereon to build their watch-huts. One selected a place by the river-side where the herbage was green and easy of access.

The other, more prudent, preferred a shelf of the rock. Every handful of straw for its thatching must be carried up a toilsome path. It would be a difficult matter, moreover, to fold his flocks at eventide. But presently the stormy season was at hand ; the rains descended, the floods came, the winds blew and beat upon his house, but it fell not. He stood in his doorway and saw the torrent roll through the wady below—with infinite but vain compassion saw it sweep away his neighbor's house to utter ruin. Oh yes, it makes a difference what a man builds on.

The foundation is already laid for us. "Other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ," the Rock of Ages.

And what is it to build on Christ? It is not merely to receive his teachings by an intellectual assent. The learned Grotius, who had taught theology all his life, lamented at the last that truth had taken no vital grip upon his heart. It is not to receive Christ sentimentally. To be a Christian is something vastly other than merely to rhapsodize about the Lord or to sing "All hail the power of Jesus' name!" Nor is it merely to enroll ourselves upon the roster of the Christian Church, for there will be multitudes who at the last shall knock, saying, "Lord, Lord, open unto us. We have cast out devils in thy name, and in thy name done many wonderful works;" but he shall say, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

To build on Jesus Christ is to receive him in such a manner that our lives shall be blended in his and we shall be able to say, "I am crucified with him; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

It is to accept him with such an all-embracing consent that his will shall be our will, his work our work, his people

our people, his manner of life our rule of action, his Bible the man of our counsel, his slightest wish our law, himself our first, last, midst, and all in all.

(1.) We receive him as our *Prophet*, i. e., as our authoritative teacher. In seeking after wisdom, which is the principal thing, we as believers in Jesus Christ pass by all the philosophical schools and come at length unto the clear visions of Tabor, where we behold no man save Jesus only, and voices from heaven speak, "This is my beloved Son; hear him."

His word is our court of last appeal. If he teaches the doctrine of eternal retribution—the undying worm and the unquenchable fire—we can listen no more to the suggestions of a "second probation." The Lord has spoken, and his is the final word. If he says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened," we are not at liberty to question as to our Father's willingness to hear, or to resort to any prayer-test whatsoever, for his is the final word. If he delivers the Bible to us as an infallible rule of faith and practice, that ends the question as to the validity of Holy Writ. If there were mistakes in the original Scriptures and he was ignorant of them, he surely was not wise enough to be a prophet for us; or if he was aware of them and gave no hint or intimation to enlighten us, he surely was not frank enough to be a prophet for us. He has spoken, "Search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me." If we are Christians, the final word has been spoken. We have no alternative but to receive Christ's teaching with respect to the Scriptures as the veritable Word of God.

(2.) We receive Him as our *Priest*. He alone is competent to make atonement for us. Once wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, by his stripes he healeth us. He bare our sins, their shame, their bondage, and their penalty, in his own body on the accursed tree. We repose our only hope of eternal life in him.

“The atoning work is done,  
The Victim’s blood is shed;  
And Jesus now is gone  
His people’s cause to plead.  
He stands in heaven their great High Priest  
And bears their names upon his breast.”

(3.) We receive him also as our *King*. He is a Saviour with a sceptre. It is ours to obey, as one of the fathers has written, “without sciscitation.” In vain will you search your dictionary for that word “sciscitation,” but we may conjecture as to its meaning. To obey without sciscitation means without questioning, without murmuring, without interposing our personal judgment, without trepidation, without a doubt as to the Master’s right to command us. “Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am.” If we have received him as our King, the word of the virgin mother should be for our guidance, “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.”

II. So far as to the foundation. We are now ready for the *superstructure*. The superstructure is character which we, as Christians, are to build on Christ the everlasting Rock.

“But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon, for if any shall build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, his work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it and the fire shall try it.”

The reference of the apostle, in these words of admonition, was probably to the conflagration of Mummus which consumed a large portion of Corinth, B. C. 146. The marble homes and palaces were unharmed, but the straw-thatched huts were utterly swept away. The poor tenants were saved, but they wept over the loss of their "all." So, says Paul, take heed how ye build, for the time is coming when your fabric shall be put to the test; the day shall declare it, the fire shall try it.

But what are the things which go to make up character?

(1.) *Creed*. Archimedes was wont to say that he could lift the world if only he might find a place for the fulcrum of his lever. A man's creed is his *pou sto*, his point of leverage. Our power is measured by our faith. The potter, Palissy, believed in white enamel and spent his life in an endeavor to produce it. Peter the hermit believed in the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre, and roused all Christendom to accomplish it. Alexander T. Stewart believed in gold as the principal thing, and died in possession of an abundance of it. Columbus believed in "India to the West," and found San Salvador. William Carey believed in "India for Christ," and gave the primal impulse to the great missionary propaganda. A man without a creed is a purposeless do-naught. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

(2.) The next thing in the making up of character is a *consistent manner of life*. A man must exemplify his creed in his walk and conversation. The only piety that is worth the having is piety that tells the truth, that pays its debts when they fall due, that gives sixteen ounces to the pound, that votes for the upright candidates, that utters never an envious or unsavory word, that laughs with the



clear sweet laughter of childhood and not with that dry cachinnation of folly which is as the crackling of thorns, which conserves the peace of the home and the comfort of the neighborhood, which fears to do evil and loves to do well.

When the cynic, Diogenes, was informed that a fellow philosopher of unsavory character was still engaged upon an elaborate system of truth, he dryly remarked, "So! and when will he begin to practise it?" A wiser than he has said, "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt hath lost its savor it is thenceforth good for naught but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men."

(3.) The last element in the building of character is *co-operation with God*. Without this the edifice is but a roofless thing. To spend one's energy in the mere formulation of a creed and the elaboration of personal graces is to live a purely selfish life.

Not long ago a ship foundered off this coast and many of her passengers went down. Her captain, wearing two life-preservers, was dragged aboard a fishing-boat, more dead than alive. On recovering, his first words were, "Where are my wife and children?" He should have thought of that before. If he had been a thorough man he would have buckled those life-preservers on his wife and children and struck out for himself. Too much of the worrying we Christians do is about our own salvation. We are all too little concerned about the deliverance of the great multitude of struggling swimmers in the deep. The Lord said, "My Father worketh and I work." God worketh. In the footfall of missionaries who tread dangerous paths and pursue weary journeyings in pagan lands, in the prayers of mothers who are pleading for their wayward children, in the voices of



those who declare the glorious gospel from ten thousand pulpits, we note the tokens that our Father is at work. Oh that we may all, in sympathy with Jesus, answer, "And I work!" He stood between the market-place and the harvest-field: on one hand were the idlers, on the other the golden grain, and he said, "Go ye, thrust in the sickle and reap." It is for us, if we are true men and loyal, eager to build up character in the likeness of Jesus, the ideal man, to enter into eager participation with him in the great work of delivering the enslaved race from its bondage of sin.

Cannot a man be saved without such a character? Ay, that he can: he can be saved so as by fire. He can stand at the last like those poor Corinthians when the conflagration had swept away their homes, saved but lamenting the loss of their all. O God, let us come to heaven's gate not like idlers, empty-handed, but laden with the golden sheaves of the harvest. Let us come, not like those trustees of the heavenly bounty who, having received one talent, shall bring it in an earth-stained napkin, but rather as those who are burdened with the riches of the spiritual life. Let us come not as fugitives escaping from the avengers of blood, with the footsteps close behind them, but rather as victors, bearing in our bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus, the scars of many valiant struggles with our darling sins, of many an earnest conflict with the strongholds of iniquity, and leading with us a company of captives of hope, saying, "Here, Lord, am I and those whom thou hast given me." O Lord, save us not as by fire, but rather minister unto us an abundant entrance at heaven's gate!

## SEVEN WONDERS.

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“Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this.” Jer. 2 : 12.

OUR curiosity is a racial trait. We smile at the Athenians because they spent their time in nothing else but to see and hear some new thing, but we all have the same infirmity. A dime museum will attract more patrons than a university lecture course. We run after the outré, the extraordinary, the abnormal. Like the Jews we are always clamoring for a sign, for something out of the common. The parents of the olden time were wont to tell their eager children of the seven wonders. These were: (1.) The Pyramids. (2.) The Temple of the great Diana of the Ephesians. (3.) The Statue of Jupiter at Olympia. (4.) The Tomb of Mausolus. (What a satire on immortality! Who was Mausolus? We know not, but the mausoleum is with us. He gave his name and glory to his tomb.) (5.) The Colossus at Rhodes. (6.) The Pharos at Alexandria. (7.) The Hanging Gardens of Babylon.

The world has been moving, however. The old wonders are obsolete. One can reach with his finger-tips seven more wonderful wonders than they: the steam-engine—the sewing-machine—the phonograph—the submarine cable—St. Patrick’s Cathedral (that marvel of beautiful architecture and municipal fraud!)—Greenwood Cemetery (abounding with marvels of sculpture and inscriptions of hope beyond what the ancient world knew)—and our Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World.

We have to do, however, at this moment with marvels in the province of the spiritual life. There are some things here touching our relations with the spiritual world whereat heaven must wonder. A thoughtful man will find it impossible to explain them.

First Wonder—*an Unclaimed Crown*. God made man in His likeness, with a splendid birthright and glorious possibilities before him. He was of the line royal, the blood of the King of kings flowing in his veins. He was made rational, able to ponder the great questions of the spiritual life. He was made immortal, animated by the breath which God himself had breathed into his nostrils and destined to live for ever. He was made an heir of the kingdom. If a child of God, then an heir of glory, and joint-heir with God's only Son to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

Where is the man to whom God extends this crown? See him yonder chasing butterflies, pursuing thistle-down. He calls this pleasure. See him toiling with a muck-rake, his eyes downcast, plucking coins out of the garbage and loading himself with them. He calls this wealth. See him climbing laboriously the rocky side of yonder cliff that he may carve his initials upon its face—and fall. And this is fame! All the while the windows of heaven are open above him and the glory of the celestial realms is unveiled before him. He gives no heed. God reaches forth to him a crown of righteousness. He gives no heed. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for this is a marvellous thing!

Second, *a Secret Sin*. Here we touch the lowest part of our nature. A dog with a bone sneaks off to a corner of the garden and buries it, watching meanwhile out of the corners of his eyes that none may know his secret.

So we bury our darling sins, so we flatter ourselves that none shall ever find us out. An Egyptian princess died four thousand years ago and her body was committed to a company of priests for embalming. They said, "Let us save ourselves the trouble; it will never be known." So they dipped the body of a common Egyptian into bitumen and placed it in the princess' casket. It was a clever trick; but a few years ago, before a company of scientists at Tremont Temple, gathered together to witness the unswathing of the royal mummy, the bands of byssus were unwound and the fraud perpetrated by those priests, now forty centuries dead and turned to dust, was detected. There is indeed nothing hidden that shall not be brought to light, and that which is done in a corner shall be proclaimed on the housetop. "Thou hast set our iniquity before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance!" Noonday, calcium light, electric light, the terrible lightning showing the landscape for one vivid instant—what are these to the flames glowing from the eyes of a justly indignant God?

O man, keep thyself from secret faults, for the trumpets shall blazon them forth in the last day; they shall be written as in flame across the heavens. The fiends shall deride thee for them, the angels shall weep.

Third, *a Reprobate's Laugh*. Not long ago I heard the merry laughter of a girl and looked that way. A carriage was passing by. Through the open window I saw two women, the one old, haggard, bedizened—it was easy to discern her vocation—the other a sweet-faced girl late from some country home, going garlanded to death. God help her!

How dare they laugh who are hurrying on unprepared to the judgment bar? Yet they are making merry every-

where. The dice are rattling in the upper rooms, the revellers are staggering along the streets, the ungodly are making their merry quips—it is enough to break an angel's heart to hear it. An asylum is afire; a wretched creature sits aloft watching the blazing rafters, wringing his hands and shrieking with laughter—it is the merriest moment of his life; the walls sway, creak, fall in a mass of flaming ruins! It is a parable of the false revelry of the wicked. O men and women, let us be safe and then be merry. Let us never laugh again until our peace is made with God.

Fourth, *a Christian's Groan*. We profess to believe that the past is forgiven, all gone like a nightmare, and that heaven is open before us and that Christ walks with us, an ever-present and helpful friend. If a man believes these things, how can he ever hang his head like a bulrush? Surely something is wrong. If his sins are forgiven, if glory is sure, he ought to be singing, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow." He ought, like the cripple at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, whom Peter healed, to be "walking and leaping and praising God."

One night in Newgate prison a man sang cheerily and swung like a boy on the post of his bed. "Fine shining shall we have to-morrow!" Who is this and what "shining" shall there be? This is John Bradford, and to-morrow he is to die at the stake. But what matter, if the day after to-morrow he shall be in the midst of the merry-making of heaven? Why shall he not with glad-some heart be praising God?

The joy of the Christian should be as the joy of the spring-time, as the song of the vintage, as the rejoicing over treasure found, as the shouting of those who divide

the spoil. The world knows full well that if we are sincere in our profession of belief we cannot but be light-hearted. Our God hath girded us with gladness, he hath compassed us about with songs.

Fifth, *a Tattered Livery*. Our Lord tells of a marriage feast whereat a certain one was found who had not on the wedding gown. His host remonstrated with him, "Friend, how camest thou in hither in this garb?" And the man was silent. We are going to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Our heavenly Host has provided for us fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints; as it is written, "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." To appear in that heavenly presence clad in our own righteousness is to be found arrayed in rags and tatters, for all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.

Oh how preposterous to suppose that our poor virtues should entitle us to recognition at the heavenly court! To think of God bartering the incalculable riches of eternal life for our poor invoice of good works! Unclothe yourself, O friend, and be clothed upon with the imputed virtue of the crucified Redeemer.

Nor are all the self-righteous outside the charmed circle of the Christian Church. To trust in the virtue of devotional pomp and ceremonial, of baptismal water or sacramental elements, is to prepare for ourselves an eternal disappointment. "To the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write: Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire,



that thou mayest be rich ; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress ;  
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head."

Sixth, *an Averted Face*. A few days ago, at a hanging in a neighboring State, it is said that twenty thousand people left town and tramped four miles along a country road to see a poor wretch swung from the gallows-tree. There is, indeed, something brutal in our human nature. When our Lord Jesus was dying on the accursed tree it is written, "The people stood beholding." He was bearing their sins in his own body yonder, the iron of retributive justice had entered his soul, he was being wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities, that by his stripes they might be healed, and they stood with cold eyes "beholding." Ay, there is something brutal in our human nature.

Is it strange that men should look on anguish with a calm delight? Was it strange that men could look at Jesus dying and feel no responsive thrill of sympathy? Ah! a thousand times stranger is it that some of us should refuse to look upon him! We hide, as it were, our faces from him ; he is despised and we esteem him not.

He came to die for us, he came to set an example of ideal manhood, of perfect character. He came to offer us a helping hand for the lifting of life's burdens, the enduring of the ills which human flesh is heir to, but we



turn away our faces from him. He is here now, as if we could behold him clad in garments like the sun and offering all the treasures of eternal life for the taking. O poor blind eyes of ours that cannot see him! O stupid hearts, O palsied wills, that will not behold him!

Seventh, *a Waiting God*. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man will open unto me, I will come in and sup with him and he with me." Wonderful patience! Love that passeth knowledge! His arms are loaded with the dainties of the kingdom, apples and pomegranates from the King's gardens, and bread of life. Oh let us draw the bolts that he may come in and sup with us!

"Knocking, knocking, who is there?  
Waiting, waiting, oh how fair!  
'Tis a Pilgrim, strange and kingly,  
Never such was seen before.  
Ah, my soul, for such a wonder  
Wilt thou not undo the door?"

He hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. If he had, we should not be here. Were he to do so, the next thunder-bolt from heaven would seal our doom. We have kept him outside our closed hearts, lo, these many years, and still he waits. When we were children the dear mother told us the sweet story of the Saviour's love and bade us promise to love Him. Years passed, and the sermon from the village pulpit may have touched us and half moved us to resolution. We said, "To-morrow I will surrender to him." The years passed, and some of us are bent and gray and our hearts are hard and our wills are stubborn, and still he stands without the door—a sight to fill wondering angels with awe and pity.

"Knocking, knocking—what, still there?  
Waiting, waiting, grand and fair;  
Yes, the piercéd hand still knocketh,  
And beneath the crownéd hair  
Beam the patient eyes so tender  
Of thy Saviour waiting there."

Oh look upon him, the chiefest among ten thousand  
and altogether lovely! All heaven is aglow with the  
splendor of his face. Hear him say, "Open, and I will  
come in!" Why not this hour? Why not draw the  
bolts and say, "Come in, thou Blessed One, come in  
and sup with me!"

## SOLOMON; OR, A WORLDLY WISEMAN AT HIS BEST.

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“The words of the preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.”—Eccl. 1:1, 2.

IN the last year of David's reign a band of conspirators met together in the gardens of En-rogel. Their design was to frustrate the king's plans as to the succession by placing his elder son, the wicked Adonijah, on the throne. It was presumed that David was too old and feeble to oppose them. But they reckoned without their host. The plot having been revealed to him, his languid energies revived like fire from the ashes, and David was himself again. “As the Lord liveth,” said he, “Solomon shall reign after me.” At his command the young prince was mounted upon the royal mule and sent to the Fountain Gihon, escorted by a stately retinue, to be formally inaugurated. The sacred oil was poured upon his bushy locks, the trumpet gave the signal, and the people with one accord cried out, “God save King Solomon!” In their festivities at En-rogel the conspirators heard the distant cry; a few moments later a herald brought the tidings, “David hath anointed Solomon.” The meeting was broken up in confusion and the treasonable oaths of allegiance to Adonijah were given to the winds.

Not long afterwards the youthful king was summoned to the death-bed of his father. The last words of David were worthy of him: “My son, know thou the God of

thy father and serve him with a perfect heart. If thou seek him he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off for ever. I go the way of all the earth; be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man." With these admonitory yet hopeful words the eventful reign of David passed over into that of Solomon.

And never was sunrise brighter than the beginning of this administration, with the promise of a cloudless day.

On the high places of Gibeon the coronation ceremonies were terminated by a royal sacrifice. One hundred and twenty thousand sheep and two and twenty thousand oxen were consumed upon the altars. After this magnificent oblation the newly crowned king fell into a profound sleep, in which the Lord appeared to him, saying, "What shall I give thee?" Important moment! Portentous offer! Young, earnest, with life's splendor all before him, how natural if he should ask for wealth or pleasure or glorious conquest. But hear his request: "O my God, I am but a little child; I know not how to rule this so great people. I know not how to go out or come in before thee: give me therefore an understanding heart." Blessed is the man who can say,

"I am a scholar, and my God my tutor is,  
Who from above  
All that want learning to his school invites."

Here is the gracious promise: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

As Solomon eventually did many foolish and wicked things, it is important to ascertain the nature of this wisdom for which the young monarch prayed and with which he was so preëminently endowed. It was obviously not

that wisdom which has to do with spiritual things, the wisdom which seeks the perfection of religious character and the attainment of eternal life. It would have been well for Solomon, as the sequel shows, had he sought this enviable gift, for he lived to discover the truth so sadly uttered by the despairing Faust :

“I have heaped upon my brain  
The gathered treasures of man’s thought, in vain.  
The tree of knowledge is not that of life.”

The wisdom of Solomon was such as would be required for the management of governmental affairs. It was aptitude for liberal culture, clearness of discernment, and practical sagacity for the administration of his royal office.

He was the most learned scholar of his time, the Augustus of Jewish letters. The rabbis have a tradition that his manuscripts fell into the hands of Aristotle, who derived from them all that is best in his philosophy. Be that as it may, he was the patron of learning. He “built an house of wisdom on seven pillars,” in other words, a university. He himself was a scientist of no mean reputation. He spake of trees, from the wide-spreading cedar to the hyssop that springeth from the wall. He spake of birds and beasts and creeping things. He wrote three thousand proverbs, the juices expressed from shrewdness and common sense so as to be portable and convenient for the needs of common life. His songs were a thousand and five. He wrote an epithalamium which is rightly called the Song of Songs. Who has ever written so sweetly of the springtime : “*My beloved spake and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone ; the*

*flowers appear on the earth ; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land ; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."*

But the wisdom that Solomon most fervently craved was such as he required for the governing of this so great people, and was to discern judgment, *i. e.*, for the administration of justice. As king of the theocracy he combined in himself all the various functions of the government, the legislative, the judicial, and the executive. He was eminent for his skill in discovering the clew of real evidence in the maze of conflicting testimony, as in the case of the two mothers who contended for the living child. The years of his administration were characterized by an unwonted peace. His people dwelt securely, every man under his own vine and fig-tree, from Dan even unto Beersheba. The neighboring tribes were either allied in friendly intercourse or held in check by a vigorous display of martial force. The king's very name was a benediction—*Shelomoh*, the peaceful. For the first time in the history of Israel an extensive commerce was carried on with foreign lands. Down at Ezion-geber the ship-builders were at work. Fleets sailed out to Ophir and to Sheba, bearing wine and oil and barley, and returned with ivory, gold and precious stones, and other commodities of those distant lands. This maritime traffic, besides extensive commerce with Egypt, Tyre, and the Valley of the Euphrates, was under the control of the king ; he was the prince of merchant princes ; wealth poured into his exchequer. He built for himself a magnificent palace—its pillars of cedar, its capitals of gold—and suspended on its outer walls a thousand golden shields. The royal feasts



were superb. The drinking-vessels were of gold; none was of silver, because silver was nothing thought of in the days of Shelomoh. The daily allowance of the royal household was one hundred sheep and thirty oxen, with harts and fallow deer and fatted fowl. The king's gardens were called paradises. His stables were furnished with four thousand stalls. It is difficult in these days of republican simplicity to form a just conception of such a royal establishment. But grander than all this gorgeous array was the king himself when he appeared in the chariot of state, bright and ruddy, stalwart, sceptre in hand, sword upon thigh, guards around, archers following after, robes perfumed with myrrh and aloes, flowing hair powdered with dust of gold. Such was the personage in whom our Lord himself found the idea of regal splendor, "Solomon in all his glory."

But the picture has a dark side. It is said that in the staff on which this ruler leaned was a worm which ever slowly gnawed it asunder. One sin stands out black and forbidding against the dazzling background of Solomon's splendor: it is his profound and all-pervading selfishness. He ruled for his own glory. His rare endowment was expended on mere mental and physical enjoyment, while the divine Giver was ignored. His commerce stretched forth its Briarean hands and gathered the world's treasure into his own insatiable grasp. His wealth was used with a prodigality never equalled, not for the development of the natural resources of the kingdom, but to gratify his own voluptuous tastes. In his harem were seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines; and these seduced him to the worship of false gods. At his command shrines were built in the imperial gardens to the honor of idols, impure, bloody, and altogether abominable. How are the



mighty fallen! and how is the fine gold dimmed! "O Solomon," cries Bishop Hall, "where was thy wisdom while thy vain affections were running away with thee into such vile voluptuousness? The perfection of sagacity does not argue the inward power of self-government. Thine eye may be clear but thy hand palsied." And then he adds in his own quaint way, "How many a man have I known whose head was thus broken with his own rib!"

There is nothing sadder in history than the story of this wise man's fall—Solomon so gloriously endowed, so splendidly equipped, and going down to his grave with "Fool" written across his brow. We have seen Adam hiding his shame among the trees in the garden, Noah drunken and uncovered at noonday, Samson blind, bound with brazen fetters, grinding at the mill, David playing the idiot and scrabbling on the gates of Gath; but we have never seen a more sad and shameful sight than this—Solomon among his concubines, bowing his silvery locks before the smoking altars of their idol gods!

"So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn  
Which once he wore!  
The glory from his gray hairs gone  
For evermore!

"Of all we loved and honored, naught  
Save power remains—  
A fallen angel's pride of thought,  
Still strong in chains.

"All else is gone; from those great eyes  
The soul has fled;  
When faith is lost, when honor dies,  
The man is dead!

“Then pay the reverence of old days  
To his dead fame;  
Walk backward, with averted gaze,  
And hide the shame!”

May we not gather up some valuable flotsam and jetsam from this lamentable wreck?

*First*, the folly of self-dependence. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Solomon leaned upon his own strength and found it a broken reed that pierced his hand. Plato was accustomed to say that the conclusive mark of manhood was self-dependence. But danger lies that way.

Try it, O man with a burden of sorrow upon thee! Try it, O brother, O friend, in thy conflict with an evil habit! Try it and see how thy strength is reduced to utter weakness. No, no, we look unto the hills from whence cometh our help. The Lord is our strength, our sun, and our salvation. His gentleness shall make us great.

*Second*. The folly of self-pampering, or (shall we say?) of grand larceny; for talents are trust funds, and to use them upon self is to rob God. At the first Solomon realized this. He drained his revenues to build a temple for the worship of Jehovah, a marvel of architectural magnificence. But as he grew older and the world took firmer hold upon him he abandoned the holy house and gave his homage to self; his god was his belly, his glory was in his shame. His downfall is a warning to all such as, being equipped for holy service, do yet prefer, as Lord Bacon says, “goodness personal and practical rather than seminal and generative.” The word of the Master with respect to our talents is this: “Trade ye herewith till I come.” And his blessing is upon those who at the last can say,

"Lord, here is thy pound; it hath gained thee yet another pound."

*Third.* A lesson as to pride of culture, or intellectual vertigo—a dangerous sort of softening of the brain. It is a true saying that knowledge is power. It would be equally true to say that knowledge is weakness; for all depends upon our way of using it. How hardly shall they that be learned be saved. It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for them that trust in knowledge to enter into the kingdom of God.

The wisdom of the wisest philosopher is, by the side of omniscience, as the spark of the glow-worm in the shining of the noonday sun. Our extremest wisdom is foolishness with God. It were better to be an idiot than to presume upon our culture or to oppose ourselves by reason of mental acquirements against the prescriptions of the all-wise God.

What then is wisdom and where is the place of understanding? "I am the Way," said Jesus, "and the Truth and the Life. No man cometh unto the Father save by me." He is the Wisdom that standeth at the corner of the street, in his left hand riches and in his right length of days. There is nothing better than to know God and his Incarnate Word. For except ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God. It is pleasant to believe that Solomon came to himself in his last days. The rabbis tell of his public confession before the Sanhedrin and how the king went barefoot about the streets, like a mendicant friar, saying, "Give alms, give alms!" A better ground for belief of his after repentance is found in the book of Ecclesiastes. In this monologue we have his sober second thought. Experience is a bitter school, but fools will learn in no

other. Solomon has learned his lesson, his soul is now escaped out of the hand of the fowler, the snare is broken and he is delivered. Thus he reviews the past: "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity. I looked on all that my hands had wrought, and behold all was vanity and a striving after wind. I said, Go to, I will try thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure: and behold this also is vanity. I said, I will be wise, but it was far from me. I applied my heart to know and search out wisdom and the reason of things, and lo, this also was vanity and vexation of spirit. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments."

To you, O young men and women, for whom the future smiles like *L'Allegro* with wreathéd hands and tripping feet, beckoning to a life of pleasure; to you, men and women cumbered with much serving, ambitious to be rich, to be learned, to occupy the highest seats; to you all, fellow-travellers to the eternal world, leaving Kibbroth-hattaavah where the graves of lust are, passing Vanity Fair where all the houses are card-houses and all the visioned plans are only bubbles painted with rainbows; to you, O sons and daughters of the living God, divine in birth and destiny, come the last words of Solomon, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

## ASKING THE WAY.

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"They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." Jer. 50:5.

THE children of Israel had been in exile nearly seventy years. One generation had gone and another had come. Their memory of former days in Palestine was as a dream. They had been told by their fathers of the time when every one had dwelt in peace under his own vine and fig-tree, of that golden age when the sceptre was wielded by Solomon in his glory, of the flocks and herds, of bountiful harvests and songs of the vintage. They had heard of the temple so exceeding magnificent and of its splendid ritual, solemn pageantry, and antiphonal services; of the caravans of pilgrims, the booths on the hill-sides, the smoking altars, the effusion of waters; and they wept when they remembered these things. They were loyal to their traditions. To this day, the world over, the Israelites keep their *morale* as they keep their physiognomy. So their harps were hung upon the willows. By the Babylonish rivers they renewed their vows. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

The captivity was now drawing to a close. A time-limit had been set. For a period of four hundred and ninety years they had disregarded the Sabbatical law;

seventy Sabbatical years neglected—year for year they must expiate their sin. Now there were intimations that deliverance was at hand and that Babylon was soon to fall.

At this point a question of practical importance occurred to them. Where is the way to Zion?

We also are in exile, we are of the blood royal, we have gone far from the Father's house. Our human nature is like a ruined temple in which the echo of old hymns and prayers still lingers and where a spectral Levite walks and murmurs of a lost glory. Hence our longing to return. All souls in their lowest depths are troubled to know the way of everlasting life. It is this universal consensus of aspiration which led Plato to speak of the "wings of our preëxistent state." The homesick are everywhere. The prodigal in the far country is ever divided betwixt two, whether to rest content in his sordid surroundings or to say, with a noble impulse, "I will arise and go to my Father." The world is full of men and women who as Jesus passes by are half moved to throw themselves before him as the young ruler did, crying, "What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

It is our vocation, as ministers of the gospel, to point out the way to Zion. A grave responsibility rests upon us. Not long ago a signal man swung a white lantern as the railroad train swept by. On it went with impetuous speed until, on a sudden, there came a shock like a thunder-bolt and the train plunged down an embankment. The cars were piled one upon another, and oh the shrieking and praying then! Who shall depict the anguish of that scene? Its record will be told on grave-stones and in the sable garments of the mourners who go about the streets. It was all because of the mistaken signal. He



swung the white light when it should have been a red signal of danger. Who then is sufficient to stand in this sacred place and direct souls into the way of spiritual life? No one of us could dare do this thing were it not that we have a sure oracle. We turn to the Scriptures for our authority, and can do it with a clear conscience because these Scriptures are the veritable word of God. Here are promises and admonitions to direct us like the guide-boards along the way to the ancient cities of refuge. This way to safety! This way to deliverance from death! This way to the kingdom of God!

At the outset we are admonished in these Scriptures that there is only one way to Zion. It used to be a proverb, "All roads lead to Rome." In the centre of the Forum was a golden mile-stone, *Milliarium Aureum*, whereat all thoroughfares converged. If a traveller even in a distant province should ask, "Which way to Rome?" the answer would be, "Keep on and you will reach the golden mile-stone." There are those who seem to think that all ways, in like manner, lead to heaven's gate. If you are only sincere, keep on and you will get there. But alas, the Scriptures speak with a different voice: "There is a way which seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof is death." All roads lead out into the wilderness save one, and that is the King's highway, whereof the prophets spake, "A highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness." Here went the prophets and the patriarchs: Enoch walking with God; Abraham with a far-away look in his eyes, looking for a better country, even a heavenly, and for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; Isaiah with his eyes full of visions, singing as he went, until he fell in with a company of the ransomed who came to Zion with



songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. This way went Polycarp and Ignatius and all the noble army of martyrs. There is blood in their foot-prints. Here passed along our fathers and mothers whom we shall presently meet in the golden streets.

The ages have in no wise shortened the journey nor improved the thoroughfare. A railway has been laid from Joppa to Jerusalem. When Jonah trudged that way alone, in a vain desire to escape from the face of the Lord, it was a two days' journey. It required nearly as long when Solomon rode in his chariot of state to view the rafts of cedar that had been floated from the north. Now the journey is made in two short hours. But the King's highway to the heavenly Zion is just as it used to be. Truth and righteousness never change. The flail, the spinning-wheel, the stage-coach have all gone their way; but there are some things which cannot change. The air we breathe is the same that Adam breathed; the sunlight is the same that sifted through the mists of primitive chaos; and water is the same as when Jesus, being athirst, sat upon the curb of Jacob's well and tipped the water-jar to his lips. The gospel is like air, like sunlight, like spring water, the same always and unchangeable.

"We go the way the prophets went,  
The way that leads from banishment,  
The King's highway of holiness."

*First*, the King's highway leads down through the valley of Bochim, the place of tears. In other words, repentance is prerequisite to an entrance into life.

I know this is an old-fashioned doctrine. Time was when sinners came beating upon their breasts.

"Show pity, Lord; O Lord, forgive,  
Let a repenting rebel live!"

But there is a generation now, oh how lofty are their eyes and their eyelids are lifted up! In these days men and women come into the kingdom with heads erect and hearts unbroken. The old hymns of godly contrition have gone out of fashion. Nevertheless John the Baptist is ever the forerunner of Jesus, crying, Repent ye! repent ye! If the rent is to be healed the needle of the Law must enter before the thread of the Gospel. The heart must be broken before it can be bound up.

The duty of repentance has behind it the tremendous fact of sin. Sin is a dreadful thing, just as dreadful now as when David cried for mercy or the publican sighed, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" A wrong conception of sin is a mortal error. Sin is not a flaw in our nature, not a defect, not a misdemeanor. Sin is in the nature of *lèse-majesté*, a capital offence against a just, holy, and jealous God. It surely ends in spiritual and eternal death.

To repent is to make a frank acknowledgment of sin and to forsake it. Is there aught unreasonable in this? If I have wronged a fellow-man do I not count it a point of honor to make amends to him? Shall we not observe as high a rule of honor and manliness in our attitude to God as we do in our human relationships? If I offend shall I not make the *amende honorable*? It is the right and manly thing to repent towards God.

*Secondly*, the King's highway runs over the hill of Atonement. It is the royal way of the Cross.

The Law speaks on Calvary. It says to the sinner, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Nor is it possible to exaggerate the dreadfulness of that death. The Lord spoke of it under the figure of fire and the undying worm. If we abandon the literal meaning of these words we must not destroy the sharpness of their truth.

To Christ also the law speaks: Thou mayest expiate the sinner's guilt. The sword awakes against the Shepherd. The only-begotten Son of God, assuming our place before the law, is wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. He dies that we may live. But between the sinner with the death-sentence resting upon him and Christ suspended upon the shameful cross there is a mighty chasm. How can the innocent suffer for the guilty? and what avails it for the sinner that Jesus dies? Over that chasm faith springs a mighty arch. By divine appointment the exercise of faith on the part of the sinner is made the sole condition of salvation. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life. Does any one object? Who can interpose an objection? The parties to this covenant of grace are the Father, his only-begotten Son, and the sinner. If these parties to the covenant all consent, who shall prevent the consummation of this glorious Atonement? The Father is willing, the Son is willing, and if I, the sinner, am willing, the covenant holds and I live.

Thus it is written: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also freely give us all things? For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor

things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

*Thirdly.* The King's highway runs thenceforth across the open country to heaven's gate. No skulking here! With the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the lips confession is made unto salvation.

It is sometimes held that religion is a secret principle that hides behind the lattice, a shy and modest thing. For this there is no warrant in Scripture. The Lord did lift up his voice against the blowing of the trumpets in giving alms and the making of long prayers on the corners of the streets and the broadening of the fringes and phylacteries; but he said also, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." There is no reason anywhere to believe that true piety dwelling in the human heart is like that maid in "Twelfth Night," who

"never told her love,  
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek."

If I have found a Saviour, and the joy of the great discovery has come into my heart, I cannot but sing my hosannas. The power of godliness is like ointment in the hand, which ever bewrayeth itself.

This then is the heavenward way, through the valley of Bochim, across the hill of Atonement, and along the open to the kingdom of God. These are the prerequi-

sites of life, Repent, believe, and be baptized, *i. e.*, give an outward token of your inward faith.

If any of us are asking the way to Zion, with face turned thitherward, the Lord now calls us. It is a happy journey and glory is at its end. In Bunyan's dream he saw that Christian and Hopeful, having passed beyond the enchanted ground and the valley of shadows, came to the land of singing birds and blooming flowers. In the far distance the heavenly city glowed in the sun and at length the pilgrims came to the King's gardens where they ate of the grapes and pomegranates and passed on. Then shining ones came out to meet them from the innumerable company of angels and just men made perfect, and these greeted them, saying, "Blessed are ye that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." On they went with singing and trumpets, nearer and nearer to the Heavenly City. And now they were so near they could read above its gates, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to enter in." And then the gates were opened and voices said unto them, "Enter into the joy of your Lord." And the dreamer saw as they passed in that they were transfigured. He looked in for a moment through the gates and caught a glimpse of the ineffable glory, saw the heavenly company walking to and fro, heard the singing, and then they shut to the gates. "Which," says the dreamer, "when I had seen, I wished myself among them!" O friends in the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be presently among them; we shall behold the glory, mingle with the heavenly throng, have part in the triumphant chorus, and be for ever with the Lord!

## THE WORK OF THE COMFORTER.

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"Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come he will reprove the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment: of sin, because they believed not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." John 16:7-11.

IN the days of man's innocence he held communion with God as one friend with another. They walked together in the garden "in the cool of the day." There were strange confidences, wonderful trysts. We cannot understand it.

Then came the fall, and with it alienation: the two friends parted. Manifestations of God thereafter were mere glimpses, an occasional theophany, the Angel of the Covenant or a shadowy presence known only by the rustling of his garments. The time came, however, when God bowed the heavens and came down and dwelt among men. He took flesh upon him and walked along the common thoroughfares of life. We can understand that. Men saw him, clasped hands with him, ate with him. He was their fellow. Was it not a glorious privilege to look upon this incarnate God and talk with him by the way? Of all the songs our children sing none is sweeter than this:

"I think, when I read that sweet story of old,  
When Jesus was here among men,  
How he called little children as lambs to his fold;  
I should like to have been with them then.



“I wish that his hands had been placed on my head,  
That his arm had been thrown around me,  
And that I might have seen his kind look when he said,  
‘Let the little ones come unto me.’”

I am not sure, however, that ours is not a far more blessed privilege. He has indeed vanished out of our sight; his face is a sweet memory, a blissful hope; but his spiritual presence is with us.

“It is expedient,” said he, “that I go away from you; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” This Jesus had been with them as child and man for thirty years. They had heard his words and were prepared to say, “Never man spake like this man.” They had seen his works and could testify, “No man could do these things except God were with him.” And what was the result? A little group of fishermen and other humble folk had gathered about him. That was all. To outward seeming his work was a fiasco. His announced purpose was to revolutionize the spiritual structure of the world; but what an insignificant outcome!

Where was the trouble? It lay in the limitations of the flesh. All bodily presence is weak. No man in the flesh has ever attained to universal conquest or ever will. Cæsar?

“Imperial Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,  
May stop a hole to keep the wind away.”

Alexander? When all was told he lay dead under his supper-table. Napoleon? In lonely, friendless exile he wore away his life. If a man is going to lift the world, the fulcrum of his lever must be set outside of it.

So long as Jesus dwelt among his disciples they were wholly dependent upon his bodily presence. One night,

while rowing across the Sea of Gennesaret, the storm fell upon them and they were overwhelmed with fear. What at that moment was their Master's power to them? Yet he was only three miles away. Their faith was so sensuous it reached only to their finger-tips. He must therefore vanish out of their sight; for their sake, for the world's sake, he must leave them.

Lycurgus who, about 900 B. C., prepared a code of laws for Sparta, believing that his personal presence was a hindrance to the just observance of that code, mysteriously disappeared and was never seen or heard of. In like manner, to secure the legitimate fruits of his ministry Christ must go away.

But when he vanished he left behind him a bequest which was to be a manifold equivalent for every loss. The Holy Ghost, his last and unspeakable gift, was not hemmed in by any environment of time or space. To this Omnipresent Power the work was now to be transferred, and he was to carry it on unto "the restitution of all things." The followers of Jesus would indeed know him no more after the flesh, but they would know him far more gloriously and effectively in the power of this Spirit of God.

So he went his way. He bowed his weary shoulders, burdened with the world's sorrows, and passed through the narrow wicket. And what then? For a season his followers felt that all was over. "I go a-fishing," said Peter; and the others said, "We also go with thee."

Then, after his resurrection, Christ reappeared and remained among his disciples forty days—long enough to convince them that whereas he had died he was now alive for evermore—long enough to mark out for them the plan of the campaign. Then, having emphasized their

great commission, "Go ye everywhere and preach the gospel," he breathed on them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" and the clouds received him out of their sight.

The gift of the Holy Ghost thus conferred was only an earnest of what was to come. Ten days passed by; then, while they were praying in the open court, on a sudden the sound of a rushing mighty wind was heard, the flame, parting asunder into tongues of fire, sat upon each one of them, and they began to speak with divers tongues. This advent of the Holy Ghost was signalized by the conversion of three thousand in a single day. His power is abroad to-day. Through it the Father and the Son are working for the regeneration of the world. To be clothed with it is to be endued with extraordinary energy. The Master promised, after he had gone to the Father, that his disciples, being thus energized, should perform greater works than his own. The twelve who had been unable to cast out an unclean spirit unless their Lord stood by, and who, struck with terror, had forsaken him in the supreme moment of his agony, now went everywhere with holy zeal and courage proclaiming the gospel. Souls were converted by tens of thousands. The foundations of the ultimate conquest were laid, the strategic points were occupied. As time passed the power was transferred to other hands; but the Holy Spirit wrought through all.

We are living in this Dispensation of the Spirit. It is the golden age of privilege and opportunity. Any one who desires may have part in it. The measure of power is willingness. The harvest is plenteous, the fields are yellow. Go, thrust in a sickle and reap!

But the vast multitudes care nothing for this power of the Holy Ghost. They are of the earth, earthy. They

have low conceptions of spiritual truth. It is as if they were hypnotized. They can see coins, wreaths, stone houses, monuments—but they are blind to the welfare of the world, to eternity and God. Gibbon says that the Germans who dwelt along the Rhine and Danube had no idea of values. They cared more for earthen vessels than for silver vases and traded amber for toys and trinkets. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Until our misapprehensions of the great verities are corrected we shall always prefer a transient and material success to those eternal achievements of men baptized from on high and made partners in the transcendent work of the Spirit of God.

Let us dwell more specifically upon this function of the Holy Ghost in correcting our misapprehensions of spiritual truth. This function is threefold: "When the Comforter is come he will convict the world in respect of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come."

*First, of sin*, "because they believe not on me."

How little we know about the true character of sin. We see its outward tokens in wars and excesses, in vices and dishonesties. The newspapers are full of them. They thrust themselves upon our notice as we pass along the streets. But these are mere symptoms. These are not sin, but eruptions of sin. And when we try to cure them with chains and prisons and scaffold-trees we are merely doctoring the symptoms. The malady itself lies deeper down.

What is sin? *It is enmity against God.* Its supreme manifestation is not theft or adultery or murder, but the rejection of God's well-beloved Son. "This is the condemnation, that men love darkness better than light." They will not have Messiah to rule over them. This is

the head and front of all offending. This is the unpardonable sin.

The work of the Holy Ghost is to convict the world of sin by showing Christ rejected. On the day of Pentecost, when Peter, with the lambent flame of the Spirit upon his forehead, stood up in the midst to preach the gospel, he told the multitude of the dreadful thing which they had done: "Ye have taken Jesus and with wicked hands have crucified him!" They were made to see their hands red with their Messiah's blood. Then, smitten with sudden anguish, they cried out, "What shall we do?"

No man knows the character of sin until he has felt himself guilty of the great tragedy.

"'T was I that shed that sacred blood,  
I nailed Him to the tree."

To reject Christ in the clear light of this gospel age is to crucify him afresh. It is the work of the mighty Revelator to lay his hand on our blind eyes that this awful truth may flash upon us.

*Second*, He convicts the world of *righteousness*, "because I go to my Father and ye see me no more."

What is righteousness? Here again our apprehension is perverted. The nearest approach to righteousness with which the natural heart is familiar is morality or external presentableness. It is this of which Isaiah says, "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Take the best man you ever knew and uncover his deepest heart, and lo, it is a foul nest of unsuspected things. Our personal merit is as rags, tattered, torn, mildewed, moth-eaten, defiled, and falling asunder in rotten shreds.

Another form of righteousness with which we are

acquainted is an outward compliance with ceremonial law—the form of godliness without the power thereof. The poet Shelley says that his father was wont to say,

"At church on Sunday to attend  
Will serve to keep the world your friend."

There may be truth in this, but it surely cannot commend us to a holy God. He tells us that many will knock at his gate crying, Lord! Lord! but shall not be able to enter in.

The Spirit corrects these false and superficial views of righteousness by pointing to Christ glorified. He has ascended up on high to give gifts unto men. His best gift is righteousness. He from his exalted throne administers justification in the pardon of sin. And he imputes his own merit also to such as are willing to receive it. This is real righteousness, that "fine linen," clean and white, which is the righteousness of the saints.

*Third*, he reproves the world of *judgment*, "because the prince of this world is judged."

"The prince of this world," he says, "*is* judged," not will be. This judgment is now going on. We are in the midst of the great controversy. Light and Darkness are met at Armageddon. It is a mistake to suppose that all judgment is waiting for the blast of the trumpet. The trumpet-blast will mark the close of earthly judgment and the consummation of all things.

At the time when the seventy returned to Jesus, reporting that they had been able to heal diseases and do all manner of wonderful works in his name, he said—as if this working of wonders were but a mere episode in the great struggle—as if all along he had known the end from the beginning—"I saw Satan fall from heaven." In that



glance of his all history was projected upon the canvas before him. He had set out upon a work of universal conquest, and all the gates of hell could not prevail against him. The victory was sure. He heard already the rattling of the chains of the red dragon as he was hurled into the smoking pit.

The history of these nineteen centuries is a continuous story of the overthrow of evil. The world was never so far advanced in truth and righteousness as it is this day. Everything is going right! Oh that our eyes, like those of the Master, might see how truth is ever uppermost, how Satan falls from heaven! The work of the Holy Ghost makes optimists. It opens the eyes of the believer to behold the mountains full of horses and chariots. It dispels doubt and cures hypochondria. It attunes our hearts to hosannas and hallelujahs.

Thus the three great facts in the province of spiritual truth—Sin, Righteousness, and Judgment—are opened up to us by the work of the Comforter. Without his aid we cannot understand them. Come, Holy Spirit, come! Come as light to illuminate our dull understanding! Come as the morning dew to refresh our wearied energies and give us hopeful and joyous views of spiritual truth! Come as the fire and enkindle within us new zeal for holiness, new devotion to the kingdom of God!

## THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

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"Hail, thou that art highly favored! the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women." Luke 1:28.

IF it be true that the angels have joy over the return of a wanderer to his Father's house, what a gala day that must have been in heaven when one went forth to announce that the fulness of time was come for the advent of Jesus Christ; for that portended the gathering in of a great multitude. The flight of the ambassador sent to apprise the world of His near approach was directed not to Rome, Athens, or Jerusalem, but to the most ill-reputed town in a contemptible province; and his message was delivered not to any of the great or learned, but to a maid of low degree. No doubt she was startled by his salutation: "Hail, thou that art highly favored!" and it may be easily seen why she was "troubled" by the announcement that followed: "Thou shalt bring forth a son and call his name Jesus."

The words of this angel, familiarly known as the "Ave Maria," form the first part of the Prayer to the Virgin which is made so prominent in the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church. In the sixteenth century was added the idolatrous *Ora pro nobis*: "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and in the dying hour!" No portion of Scripture has been put to baser uses than this original *Ave Maria*; yet none the less is it worthy of our reverential study, as a prelude to the sweetest rhapsody that ever fell from an angel's lips.

Let us take it asunder and learn its lessons with respect to the Virgin Mother.

I. The protevangel had said that the serpent's head should be bruised by the Seed of the woman. Three thousand years later Isaiah wrote, "A Virgin shall conceive and bear a son and call his name Immanuel." The appointed time had come. As by the weakness of one woman sin had entered into the world, so to another was granted the distinguished honor of bringing forth out of her travail the Hope of eternal life. This was not by reason of any peculiar merit of her own. She was not divine, not even akin with angels. We have no reason to suppose that she was even gifted with unusual personal charms. Monks in reverie and poets in rhapsody have vied with each other in extolling her beauty. One of them describes her as "leaning out among the jessamines in the window of her home and watching the white clouds floating in the azure sky; young and beautiful, not only with the voluptuous necromacy of Oriental grace, but with those superior charms which come from riches of the soul, of thought and fancy and emotion, which lavish themselves in a perfect symmetry of mental and physical development; beautiful after the manner of the Hebrew daughters, in raven locks and lustrous eyes and the deep glowing complexion of the East, and beautiful besides with that radiance which is enkindled by the indwelling of a peace that the world knoweth not of." All this is unsubstantial as the stuff that dreams are made of. Let it suffice that she had common part with us in human nature, for in this lies the clew of the *Incarnation*. When the fulness of time was come God sent forth his Son made of a woman. He took not on him the nature of angels, but of men. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

"God rest ye all, good Christians!  
 Upon this blessed morn;  
 The Lord of all good Christians  
 Was of a woman born."

II. It is next to be observed that Mary was a *sinful* woman; she was "one among women," and not above them; being in all points such as we are, not merely in the constitution of her being, but in its defilement also. She had both inherited sin and committed it. The so-called Immaculate Conception of the Virgin has not the slightest warrant in reason or holy writ. It reads thus: "That the most blessed Virgin Mary, in the first moment of her conception, by a special grace and privilege of Almighty God, in virtue of the merits of Christ, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin." Not so have we understood her own words, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God *my Saviour*." That was a sinner's cry.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning represents the Virgin Mother as thus addressing her unconscious child:

"Sleep, sleep, my Holy One!  
 My flesh, my Lord! What name? I do not know  
 A name that seemeth not too high or low,  
 Too far from me or heaven.  
 My JESUS! *that* is best! that word being given  
 By the majestic angel whose command  
 Was softly as a man's beseeching said,  
 When I and all the earth appeared to stand  
 In the great overflow  
 Of light celestial from his wings and head.  
 Sleep! sleep! My SAVING ONE!"

The doctrine of the sinlessness of Mary was invented by the schoolmen in the Middle Ages. After a debate of six hundred years in which popes, cardinals, holy fathers and philosophers took part, it was at last made an article of

faith by a formal decree of Pius IX. on the 8th of December, 1854. This tenet is the corner-stone of Mariolatry. Its germ can be traced as far back as the fourth century; at that time a new word was coined, *Theotokos*, meaning "mother of God." By this it was not intended to assert that Mary was in any sense mother of the Uncreated Essence, but the word was liable to this interpretation. The right of Mary to the title *Theotokos* was denied by Nestorius, who was thereupon condemned for heresy in the Council of Ephesus, A. D. 431. His condemners marched through the city with torches and swinging censers.

From that moment we may regard Mariolatry as fairly under way. The troubadours celebrated the praises of Mary in sacred song, and painters represented her as crowned with a diadem of stars. The church began to sing—

"Hail, virginal mother! hail, temple divine!  
The glory of angels and purity's shrine!  
Thee from eternity  
God did ordain  
Over his household  
As mistress to reign!"

She was honored with such titles as Queen of Heaven, Crown of Virginity, Temple of the living God, Paradise of the Second Adam, Dwelling-place of the Trinity, Loom of the Incarnation, and Sceptre of Orthodoxy. It was declared that through her alone the fallen creature was raised to heaven. Thus it came to be impressed upon the popular mind that she was deserving not merely of reverence but of worship.

This was at the beginning of the Dark Ages. As the inner life of religion was quenched its outer forms were multiplied. The walls of the churches were covered with pictures of the Madonna. Five hundred years

have dimmed but not obliterated the colors of those splendid masterpieces. On panel and ceiling and vaulted chancel the Virgin and her Child are still pointed out. The Christ-Child is thrown into the background; the mother is made conspicuous and surpassingly beautiful. So by progressive steps she came to be looked on as a co-redeemer with Christ. Then from Rome was sent forth an invitation, not yet called a mandate, that all should kiss the hand before the Queen of Heaven. This was in the black night before the Reformation. It was in 1517 that Luther nailed his theses to the door of the town hall at Wittenberg and made his protest against the worship of any but the living God. All hail the protest!

For a while Mary-worship was repressed, but only to revive again in recent years as a formal dogma or pronunciamiento of the Catholic Church. At this hour there are multitudes all over the world bowing at the shrine of this woman of Nazareth and crying, "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us!" If she herself could appear in the midst of these devotees, of a certainty she would cry out, as the angel did in the vision of St. John, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant. Worship God!"

"Say of me as the Heavenly said, 'Thou art  
The blessedest of women'—blessedest,  
Not holiest nor noblest—no high name  
Whose height misplaced may pierce me like a shame  
When I sit meek in heaven."

In the gospel story she is represented as keeping herself for the most part in modest retirement. Not once do we find her laying claim to superhuman dignity or to any exemption from the ills that common flesh is heir to.

Our Lord indeed, as if with prophetic reference to the apotheosis of his mother, gave warning against it by im-



plication once and again, as when he rebuked her at the marriage in Cana for unbecoming pride and assumption of authority. So at another time, when a certain woman in the multitude cried out, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee!" he would not allow even those impulsive words to go unchallenged, but said, "Nay rather, blessed are they that keep the word of God!" She was a sinner in need of a Saviour. And her chiefest honor was not that she bare Christ but that she loved him.

III. But while the Virgin Mother is stripped of these false honors which she herself would be the first to repudiate, she still challenges our highest admiration. Why should we hesitate to speak of her as "blessed Mary" or "the blessed Virgin," when the angel thus addressed her? It is no slight honor that her name should be found in the most venerable of our creeds and mingled with the soul's confession of a Saviour: "I believe in Jesus Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary." If we decline to worship, we do not therefore disesteem her. The most beautiful traits of womanhood are associated with her character. We revere her as an ideal of feminine purity and devotion. When Gabriel told her that she was to be overshadowed by the Holy Ghost and bring forth a Son, she knew that her fair name was in danger, that the world would point its finger at her. She knew that she must wear the scarlet letter on her breast. But she bowed her head without a murmur, saying, "Behold the servant of the Lord." There was heroism! It would doubtless have been easier to die; yet her faithful heart asked no question, interposed no argument, but "set itself at once to quiet expectation." Bishop Hall says, "There is no more noble proof of faith than thus to captivate all our powers unto God and, without

sciscitation, go blindfold whither He will." It was enough for her that God required it: "Be it unto me according to thy word!"

We must also remark upon the simplicity and tenderness of her affection towards Christ. Of many pious women it is written that "they loved much:" Mary of Bethany whom we always think of as sitting at Jesus' feet; Mary of Magdala who anointed him with oil of spikenard very precious; and others who followed Him and loved Him through evil and good report. Ah, yes; many daughters have done virtuously, but thou, Mary of Nazareth, excellest them all! Bending over her divine Child in the manger, seeking him with tears in the streets of Jerusalem, waiting on Him as a handmaid in the tasks and journeys and sufferings of his ministry, not once losing faith in his power and Messiahship though she saw him begrimed with the dust of the workshop and stained with the blood of Golgotha; resignedly baring her own breast to the sword of anguish when his supreme hour came—was ever greater devotion than hers, a purer love or deeper reverence for Christ?

IV. The meaning of her name was "bitterness;" but as Marah was sweetened by the tree cast into its waters, so Mary was ennobled and sanctified by her strange maternity.

"O wondrous mother, was there ever joy like thine;  
To thee it came, that message from the Highest,  
Such as to woman ne'er before descended!  
The Almighty's shadowing wings thy soul o'erspread,  
And with thy life the life of worlds was blended."

It is not to be wondered at that the angel hailed her as one "highly favored!" or that Elizabeth was moved to call her "blessed among women," or that she herself

broke forth into singing, "My soul doth magnify the Lord; for He hath regarded the low estate of His hand-maid!" What an honor was this—to be the mother of the Desire of all Nations—to be the mother of Jesus the Christ!

But an honor higher than this is conferred by grace on every true believer. On one occasion it was reported to Jesus that his mother and brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. "But he answered and said, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, saying, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother."

We then, beloved, are elect to a spiritual oneness with Jesus which is more precious than the nearest kinship of flesh. The ties of nature are but as green withes in the titanic hands of adversity or death; but what shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? We are one with him—"one" is the word—if we have entered into the fellowship of his toil and suffering and death. We think too lightly of this mystical union. We neither fully apprehend nor take advantage of it. The King hath brought us into his chambers; how fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! The tie by which Mary was united to her Son is not comparable to this espousal of the believing soul with Him.

Let us remember the words of our Lord Jesus when he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, I pray for these, that they all may be one; as thou art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." "I in them!"—O friends, what manner of love is

this! Blessed indeed among women was Mary, mother of Jesus; but still more highly favored is every believer who has realized this fellowship with Him, who can echo the words of Bengel to his bride:

"Jesus in heaven,  
Jesus in the heart,  
The heart in heaven,  
*Heaven in the heart!*"

## COME IN, THOU BLESSED OF THE LORD.

## A NEW YEAR'S MEDITATION.

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"Come in, thou blessed of the Lord!" Gen. 24 : 31.

AT the doorway of Bethuel's house in Mesopotamia stands a wayfarer, weary and dust-stained. He is the servant of an Oriental prince. He asks entertainment for himself and his train. At a little distance his camels are kneeling under their burden of packs and bundles. The daughter of the house has just summoned her brother Laban, who seems in doubt until his glance falls upon the rich gifts which she has received from the stranger—ear-rings and bracelets, gratuities which were extraordinary even in those generous days. He infers therefrom that the new-comer represents a master of no mean importance. So right cheerily he says, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord! Wherefore standest thou without?"

This was an eventful day for Bethuel's house. Much depended upon the entertainment accorded to that stranger. Out of his visit came an alliance with the princely lineage of Abraham. The name of Bethuel was thenceforth to take its place in the history of the ages.

So stands the New Year at our threshold, laden with treasures, new gifts of heaven, hopes, aspirations, golden purposes, rings and bracelets for the adornment of personal character. We stand expectant while he unties his pack; he has great things in store for us. Welcome, O

New Year, bearer of glad tidings, ambassador of peace, herald of the Great King! Come in, thou blessed of the Lord!

The air is resonant with good wishes. "A happy New Year!" It is the children's greeting. Lips tremulous with age utter it. Sick-rooms are cheered by it. Pains are forgotten while dear ones whisper, "A happy New Year!" The world is brighter for it.

But what does this mean? What is happiness? Varro made a catalogue of two hundred and eighty definitions of it. The three leading philosophical schools in Greece were represented by Plato, Epicurus, and Zeno; of whom the first said, "Happiness is to live reflectively;" the second, "Happiness is to live cheerily: let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die;" and the third, "Happiness is to live with fortitude, to accept whatever comes with a brave heart, for whatever is to be, will be."

In each of these is a modicum of truth. Plato was right in saying that the happy man lives thoughtfully. Face the great problems: if there is a God, believe it; if death ends all, assure yourself of that; if the Bible is true, it is the business of every serious man to be confident of it; if Jesus Christ is the only Saviour, no man is just to himself who has not accepted him.

Epicurus was right in saying that the happy man lives cheerily. We are in a pleasant world with a good God over all. Rejoice, therefore, and again I say rejoice. Delight thyself in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes, but know thou that for all these things God will call thee into judgment, *i. e.*, in the midst of thy pleasure be mindful that thou livest for ever and make merry as becometh a child of God.



Zeno was right in saying the happy man lives with fortitude. He is superior to his environment—not indifferent, but superior to it. Why not? If he loves God all things are working together for his good. If he be cast into a furnace of affliction heated seven times hotter than ever before, he can endure it because he knows that it is working a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, and because in the midst of the flame there walks with him One like unto the Son of God.

The three prerequisites of happiness are found in an inscription on the keystone of an ancient castle. Who was lord of the castle no one knows.

“ His sword is rust,  
His good steed dust,  
His soul is with his God, we trust.”

Here is the device: a hand reached upward, as in supplication, and over it the legend “WILL, GOD, I CAN.” In that old Saxon legend, if it be rightly understood, lies the secret of happiness.

I. Will. The beginning of all is choice. Without that a man is always a mere creature of circumstance.

One windy day a kite, flying aloft, struggled to be loosed from the invisible cord that held it. A flock of cloud floated by and said, “Come with me; the skies are clear and this is a merry life.” The kite, struggling vainly to be free, cried, “I cannot; I am held.” A ball of thistle-down whispered as it was carried past, “Come with me; this is delight.” The kite replied, “I cannot; I am held.” A wisp of paper went whirling by. “Oh this is a joyous life; come with me.” “I cannot,” replied the kite; “I am held.” We, beloved, are in the midst of currents and counter-currents, in perpetual danger of being carried hither and yon by capricious winds. Oh blessed is the

soul that is held!—held to something, held by a ruling purpose. Blessed is the man who goes not with the multitude, but holds his place while it goes surging by.

Have you a ruling purpose? Is your eye single for anything? The double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. Albert Bushnell was fond of saying, "Grasp the handle of your being." Ay, that way lies success. Grasp it as a man grasps the tiller of a boat. Hold it with a calm, strong hand. Hold steady and all is well.

II. God. Alas for the man that leaves God out of his reckoning, for the chief end of man is to glorify Him.

It is necessary not only that we should choose, but that we should choose the highest and best.

(1.) A man may set out to live for himself, to live for self-culture, for the building up of character. So far as it goes this is well.

(2.) A man may live for the good of those around him. And this is better still. Sydney Smith said, "Life is in two heaps, the one of joy, the other of sorrow. If I can on any day take a little from the heap of sorrow and add it to the heap of joy, I reckon that a well-spent day." It is indeed a blessed thing to serve the common weal, to make the lives of those around us a little brighter and sweeter.

(3.) But the highest level of life is that whereon we seek the divine glory; for the ultimate of everything is God. It was said among the ancients, to every one was given a choice of three urns. One was a golden urn full of blood, and in it was the single word "Empire." The second was of amber; it was full of ashes, and in it was the word "Glory." The third was an urn of clay, and empty, but in the bottom was written "God." The last was the

best of all, for, as they were wont to say, one letter of that name outweighs the world.

And true happiness is impossible to the soul that is without God. If we set out to lean upon ourselves we shall find our strength a broken reed that will pierce through the hand. If in time of trouble we seek comfort from within, it will be as when a foolish man seeks to hide in his own shadow. David tried it and failed. Over and over again he failed. Then he cried, "I will look unto the hills from whence cometh my help!" Nor did God ever fail him. Sometimes he was sorrowful, but never in despair. "Why art thou cast down, oh my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God."

III. I can. This means resolution.

Resolution is more than choice. Choice is a volitional act, but resolution is a persistent force. In the equipment of a soldier it is represented by sandals. "Put ye on," says the apostle, "the whole armor of God," to wit, the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shield of faith, wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the adversary; and take the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. Is that all? Oh no. See to it that ye have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. In those times battles were fought not with heavy artillery from distant hilltops, nor by sharp-shooters from rifle-pits, but with short swords, face to face and eye to eye. Much depended then upon a man's footing. The spiked sandals were of the utmost importance. Put on the sandals, therefore, O follower of Christ, who in the coming year must confront the adversary ten thousand times. Put on the sandals

of resolution, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Still further, resolution is more than resolutions. The latter are fragmentary volitions. On New Year's Eve a multitude are wont to turn over a new leaf, and, alas, the new leaf is pretty sure to be like the old one, blotted and stained with short-comings. But resolution is one persistent energy that covers the twelvemonth. And this indeed we must have, for there is no discharge in this war.

"Ne'er think the victory won;  
Nor lay thine armor down;  
Thine arduous work will not be done  
Till thou obtain thy crown."

A little while ago we were watching for the comet. Astronomers were questioning whether it was a fragment of Biela's or an independent body on an eccentric orbit of its own. Though the stars were shining all the while no one heeded them. But while we were watching and questioning, lo, the comet was gone—gone, no one knew whither. Then in the blue heavens the stars still shone on. There are cometary resolves that last for a moment; there are stellar purposes that endure for ever. It is not a thousand choices, but one resolution made in dependence upon divine strength, that wins. That was a wise thing that Dr. Johnson said in his old age: "I have been resolving these fifty-five years; now I take hold on God."

I think there must have been an extraordinary charm in Jesus' face, some magnetism in the glance of his eye—else why was it that when he passed through the gate and said to the publican, "Arise, and follow me," he was instantly obeyed? And when he walked along the seashore and said to the fishermen, "Come, follow me," they left

their nets and became his disciples? Oh that he might pass this way and lift upon us the light of his countenance and draw us with the glance of his eye!

To some he has been speaking, lo these many years. You have seen his face, but you have not heeded him. Now at the opening of this New Year he speaks again, "Arise, and follow me." The beginning of the spiritual life is in the exercise of the will. All depends upon that "I will." But, alas, we wrong our wills again and again until they are as helpless as a fakir's hand. Time was when that hand lay white and chubby on a mother's breast. Time was when it was strong and supple. But the devotee has held it so long in one strained position that the nails have grown into the palm, the flesh has shrunk, the muscles are tense as whip-cords, the veins are dried up, and the whole hand is as helpless as a mummy's hand. So is it with your wills. I say, "Love God." You answer, "I cannot." I say, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." You say, "I cannot." It is indeed a desperate case. There is blessed encouragement, however, in the fact that when God commands he gives the power to obey. Work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you. The Christ who says, "Arise, and follow me," will give you power this moment to obey him. But whether that will ever be true again, who shall say?

The battle of Waterloo was fought in a twenty-acre field. "Now" is a little word of only three letters, but your destiny is in it.

The old year is behind us. To look over our shoulders is to grow sad, but blessed be God, we can forget. One of God's chiefest gifts is oblivion for our sins. He will remember them no more against us. Nor need

we ourselves remember them. The Japanese have a proverb :

"My sleeve with tears is always wet,  
I have forgotten to forget."

But here is our word touching the past: "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The New Year is before us. We stand, as Abraham stood upon the banks of the Euphrates, looking off towards an unknown country. Our strength at this moment is in the living God. "Oh carry us not up hence except thou go with us!" If He be Guide and Counsellor, all will be well. Let us set forth bravely as Sir Walter Raleigh did when he sang :

"Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,  
My staff of faith to lean upon ;  
My scrip of joy, immortal diet ;  
My bottle of salvation ;  
My gown of glory, hope's true gauge ;  
And thus I take my pilgrimage."

Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

Up with your heart, O believer—*sursum corda!* and up with your hand—WILL, GOD, and I CAN.

Without Him I can do nothing ; I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.



# THE TESTIMONY OF INFIDELS

## TO THE

### TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

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“For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.” Deut. 32:31.

IT is the business of the ministry to commend the religion of Christ. People want to know whether the system of doctrine and ethics set forth in the Scriptures is true or not. We profess to believe that it is. It is our business to prove it. This is our case. If we turn aside to other considerations they are mere diversions. There are various ways of approaching the matter in hand.

First. We may use the *a priori* method; that is, we may take an antecedent probability and proceed to verify it. If there is a God he would probably reveal himself in a Book and in a Life. The Bible meets the requirements of the Book and Jesus Christ is the Life.

Second. The *a posteriori* method; that is, reasoning from facts to conclusions. For there are certain facts known and visible to all men for which it is impossible to account otherwise than by attributing a supernatural power to the religion which centres in the Cross.

Third. Our case may be substantiated by external evidence. If we open history we discover that the genius of Christianity has come down through the ages like the

Angel of the Morning, illuminating on every side the abodes of such as dwell in darkness and the shadow of death. If we open our geography it is equally apparent that the lands of Christendom are the sunlit portions of the earth. In these, and these only, the wildernesses rejoice and blossom like the rose.

Fourth. Internal evidence or personal experience. There is no escaping the power of this kind of proof. "I know not," said the blind man, "as to the nature or character of this Jesus, but I do know that whereas I was blind, now I see." An innumerable company of people is prepared to testify as to the power of the religion of Jesus to help in time of trouble, to deliver from sin, to comfort and sustain in every hour that trieth the soul of a man.

Fifth. In demonstrating the truth of Christianity we may use the testimony of its friends. An army of such witnesses is ever marching past. Here are kings and potentates from Constantine to Queen Victoria. Here are scholars innumerable, the Bacons and Newtons of many centuries. Here are philanthropists like Howard and Wilberforce glad to acknowledge that in their beneficent work they were merely following out the precepts of Scripture and treading in the footsteps of that Gracious One whose life was told briefly in the saying, "He went about doing good."

Sixth. There is still another view-point, however, to wit, the testimony of the enemy. The ancients believed that it was wise to learn *ab hoste*, that is, from the weapons of the adversary.

"There's wit there ye'll get there  
Ye'll find nae ither-where."

On the way down to Timnath a lion sprang out upon

the strong man, and he rent its jaws asunder as if it had been a kid. Not long after, going that way, he found the carcass. A swarm of bees was housed within it. From this incident came the riddle: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." All along the thoroughfares of history and experience the enemy has lain in wait for the unarmed and heedless. But infidelity has ever been worsted, and to-day we pluck honey from between the lion's ribs.

It is our present purpose to pursue a brief argument from the concessions made by infidels and unbelievers as to the divineness of Jesus and the power of the religion which has its living centre in Him.

Let us begin at the beginning.

I. Our first witnesses shall be a group of three who were able to testify from more or less intimate acquaintance with the living Christ.

(1.) Pilate. It was he who sentenced Jesus to death. Yet at the supreme moment he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." The word rendered *just person* is *dikaïos*, the same used by Plato in characterizing the ideal man.

(2.) The Centurion who had charge of the crucifixion of Jesus. He was a tried and trusty soldier, accustomed to scenes of blood, but he was profoundly impressed with the demeanor of Jesus in his agony on the cross. "Certainly," he said, "this was a righteous man!"\* Here he was a Unitarian. As time passed, observing His humility, His divine patience, His forgiving grace, he cried, lifted up above his Unitarianism, "Truly this was the Son of God!" He knew the hopes of Israel respecting the

\* *Dikaïos*. Plato's word again.

coming of Messiah, one of whose distinctive titles was "the Son of God," and he was persuaded that those hopes were realized in this Jesus whom they had sentenced to the accursed tree.

(3.) Judas. On the morning of the crucifixion he entered the hall Gazith, the meeting-place of the Sanhedrin, and threw upon the floor the silver coins that were the price of his treachery. It was but last night that he coolly bargained away his Lord; now remorse has seized upon him. The ring of those red-stained pieces of silver has come down through the ages with the cry of the traitor, "I have betrayed innocent blood!"

II. We now come to the post-apostolic period and summon a coterie of stalwart enemies of Christ.

(4.) Josephus, the Jewish historian, who wrote in the first century of the Christian era. In his "Antiquities" \* he says, "About this time lived Jesus, a wise man—if it be proper to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works. He was a teacher of such men as receive the truth. He was called the Christ. And when Pilate, at the instigation of our principal men, had condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him did not forsake him. And he appeared to them alive again on the third day, the prophets of old having foretold these and many other wonderful things concerning him. And the sect of Christians, so named after him, is not extinct unto this day."

(5.) Celsus, a Greek philosopher of the second century, who wrote vigorously against the sect of Galileans. He quotes liberally from the New Testament and concedes the genuineness of the miracles of Christ, while

\* The question of the authenticity of this passage is discussed at length in the Appendix of Schaff's "Person of Christ," to which credit is due for most of the extracts used in this discourse.

attributing them to the influence of evil spirits. It is noteworthy at this point that the fact that miracles were wrought by Jesus was not called in question in those early days. It was admitted, but accounted for generally on the ground that he was a sorcerer, or, as in the Talmud, that he was a master of the magical arts of Egypt. In any case it was conceded that he wrought many wonderful works.

(6.) Porphyry of the second century, a Neo-platonist, who wrote fifteen volumes against Christianity. He says, in speaking of the oracles, "The goddess Hecat   hath declared Jesus to be a most pious man, his soul, like the souls of other pious men, favored with immortality after death. The Christians do mistakenly worship him. And when we asked at the oracle, 'Why then was he condemned?' she answered, 'The body is liable to suffering, but the soul of the pious dwells in heavenly mansions.' He hath indeed been the occasion of error in leading others away from the acknowledgment of the immortal Jove; but, being himself pious, he is gone to the dwelling of the gods."

(7.) Julian, the Apostate, emperor of the fourth century. He was a bitter enemy of Christianity. He tried to restore the pagan worship. He rebuilt the temples and went in person to sacrifices. But the multitude had lost confidence in the old superstitions. His failure to revive the dying spark of paganism filled him with anger and bitterness. He vented his spleen in satire against Christ and his followers. The story of his death is familiar. In a campaign against the Persians he fell, pierced with a spear. Clutching the dust in his last agony, he cried, "Galilean, thou hast conquered!" He says, "Jesus, having persuaded a few of the baser sort of Galileans to attach

themselves to him, has now been celebrated about three hundred years. He did nothing in his lifetime worthy of fame, unless it be counted a great work to heal lame and blind people and exorcise demoniacs." A splendid tribute, this, to the beneficent work of Jesus! For is it not a great thing to heal lame and blind people and cast out evil spirits? Is it not a vastly greater thing than to rule an empire as Julian did?

III. We leap a thousand years and come to another group of unbelievers. We are now in the midst of influences which are ultimately to provoke a social and political upheaval throughout the civilized earth.

(8.) Spinoza. He is referred to as the father of modern pantheism. He did not believe in the personality of God, but regarded him as an all-pervading something with the attributes of extension and thought. As to this God, however, he says that "Jesus Christ was his temple. In him God has most fully revealed himself." This is a faint echo of that which is written, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

(9.) Thomas Chubb, a leader of the modern deists. He was a tallow-chandler in his early life and his sympathies were with the common people. Though he rejected the divineness of the gospel, yet he was pleased to compliment it as a religion for the poor. He says, "In Christ we have an example of a quiet and peaceable spirit, of a becoming modesty and sobriety—just, honest, upright, sincere, and above all of a most gracious and benevolent temper and behavior—one who did no wrong, no injury to any man, in whose mouth was no guile; who went about doing good, not only by his ministry, but also in



curing all manner of diseases among the people. His life was a beautiful picture of human nature in its own purity and simplicity, and showed at once what excellent creatures men might be under the influence of his gospel."

IV. And now we present three malignant spirits, than whom no others in history have probably exercised a more disastrous influence on human thought, the master-spirits of the period of the French Revolution.

(10.) Diderot, father of the *Encyclopedie* which was the dragon's egg of the Reign of Terror. In a conversation with the Baron de Holbach he is represented as saying, "For a wonder, gentlemen, I know nobody, either in France or elsewhere, who could write as these Scriptures are written. This is a Satan of a book. I defy any one to prepare a tale so simple, so sublime and touching, as that of the passion of Jesus Christ."

(11.) Jean Jacques Rousseau, brilliant, erratic, inconsistent. Here is a remarkable saying of his: "I will confess to you that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the gospel has its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers, with all their pomp of diction—how mean, how contemptible are they compared with the Scriptures! Is it possible that a book so simple and at once so sublime should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred personage whose history it contains should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the tone of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? What sweetness, what purity in his manner! What an affecting gracefulness in his instructions! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind, what subtlety, what fitness in his replies! How

great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and so die without weakness and without ostentation? When Plato describes his imaginary just man, loaded with all the punishments of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ, and the resemblance is so striking that all the Church Fathers perceived it. . . What prepossession, what blindness, must it be to compare the son of Sophroniscus to the son of Mary! What an infinite disproportion between them! The Spartans were a sober people before Socrates recommended sobriety. Before he had even defined virtue his country abounded in virtuous men. But where could Jesus learn among his contemporaries that pure and sublime morality of which he only has given us both precept and example? The greatest wisdom was made known among the most bigoted fanaticism; and the simplicity of the most heroic virtues did honor to the vilest people on the earth. The death of Socrates, peacefully philosophizing among his friends, appears the most agreeable that one could wish: while that of Jesus, expiring in agonies, abused, insulted, and accused by a whole nation, is the most horrible that one could fear. Socrates, indeed, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed the weeping executioner who administered it: but Jesus, amid excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. *Yes, verily, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God."*

(12.) Voltaire. No man ever lived who wrote more viciously or bitterly of the Christian religion than he; yet hear this letter, the last he ever wrote, expressed in an honest hour and worthy of consideration as the utterance

of a dying man : " I, the underwritten, do declare that for these four days past, having been afflicted with vomiting of blood—at the age of eighty-four—and not being able to drag myself to church, the reverend Rector of Sulpice having been pleased to add to his many favors that of sending me the Abbé Gautier, I did confess to him, and if it please God to dispose of me, I would die in the Church in which I was born. Hoping that the divine mercy will pardon my faults, I sign myself in the presence of Abbé Mignot, my nephew, and Marquis de Villeville, my friend, VOLTAIRE. March 2, 1778."

V. We here introduce a witness who stands alone, the most colossal figure in history.

(13.) Napoleon. If not an unbeliever in the radical sense, he was certainly a fatalist. His star of destiny was his only Providence. In his Egyptian campaign he carried a Bible and Koran together, labelled " Politics." His soul was absorbed in personal ambition. He died murmuring, " France, Josephine, Head of the Army !" On one occasion, during his exile, Gen. Bertrand said to him, " I cannot conceive, sire, how a great man like you could believe that a Supreme Being could exhibit himself to man in human guise." Napoleon answered, " I know men ; and I tell you that Jesus Christ was not a man. Superficial minds see a resemblance between Christ and the founders of empires and the gods of other religions. That resemblance does not exist. There is between Christianity and whatever other religions the distance of infinity. We can say to the authors of every other religion, ' You are neither gods, nor the agents of the Deity. You are but missionaries of falsehood, moulded from the same clay with the rest of mortals. You are made with all the passions and vices inseparable from them. Your

temples and your priests proclaim your origin.' Such will be the judgment, the cry of conscience, of whoever examines the gods and the temples of paganism. . . . It is not so with Christ. Everything in him astonishes me. His spirit overawes me and his will confounds me. Between him and whoever else in the world there is no possible term of comparison. He is truly a being by himself. His ideas and his sentiments, the truth which he announces, and his manner of convincing, are not explained either by human organization or by the nature of things. His birth and the history of his life; the profundity of his doctrine, which grapples the mightiest difficulties, and which is of those difficulties the most admirable solution; his gospel, his apparition, his empire, his march across the ages and the realms—everything is for me a prodigy, a mystery insoluble, which plunges me into reveries which I cannot escape; a mystery which is there before my eyes, a mystery which I can neither deny nor explain. Here I see nothing human. . . . And what a mysterious symbol, the instrument of the punishment of the Man-God! His disciples were armed with it. 'The Christ,' they said, 'God, has died for the salvation of men.' What a strife, what a tempest, these simple words have raised around the humble standard of the punishment of the Man-God! On the one side we see rage and all the furies of hatred and violence: on the other there are gentleness, moral courage, infinite resignation. For three hundred years spirit struggled against the brutality of sense, conscience against despotism, the soul against the body, virtue against all the vices. The blood of Christians flowed in torrents. They died kissing the hand which slew them. The soul alone protested, while the body surrendered itself to all tortures. Everywhere

Christians fell, and everywhere they triumphed. You speak of Cæsar, of Alexander, of their conquests, and of the enthusiasm which they enkindled in the hearts of their soldiers; but can you conceive of a dead man making conquests, with an army faithful and entirely devoted to his memory? . . . Now that I am at St. Helena, now that I am alone, chained upon this rock, who fights and wins empires for me? who are the courtiers of my misery and misfortunes? who thinks of me? who makes effort for me in Europe? Where are my friends? . . . Such is the fate of great men. So it was with Cæsar and Alexander. And I, too, am forgotten; and the name of a conqueror and an emperor is a college theme. Our exploits are tasks given to pupils by their tutors, who sit in judgment upon us, awarding censure or praise. And mark what is soon to become of me: assassinated by the English oligarchy, I die before my time; and my dead body, too, must return to the earth, to become food for worms. Behold the destiny of him whom the world called the great Napoleon! What an abyss between my deep misery and the eternal reign of Christ, which is proclaimed, loved, adored, and which is extending over all the earth! Is this to die? is it not rather to live? The death of Christ—it is the death of God.”

VI. We summon now two witnesses from among the poets, both of whom, gifted with extraordinary genius, rejected the gospel of Christ.

(14.) Goethe. He said, “I consider the Gospels to be thoroughly genuine, for in them is the effective reflection of the sublimity which emanates from Jesus, and this is as divine as ever the divine appeared on earth.”

(15.) Jean Paul Richter, worshipper of the beautiful. “Jesus of Nazareth is the purest among the mighty, the



mightiest among the pure, who with his pierced hand has raised empires from their foundations, turned the stream of history from its old channel, and still continues to rule and guide the ages."

VII. The two who are now to appear and bear testimony are representative leaders of the right and left wings of modern Unitarianism.

(16.) Dr. Channing, leader of the conservatives, says, "I maintain that this is a character wholly remote from human conception. To imagine it to be the production of imposture or enthusiasm shows a strange unsoundness of mind. I contemplate it with a veneration second only to the profound awe with which I look upward to God. It bears no mark of human invention. It belongs to and manifested the beloved Son of God. I feel as if I could not be deceived. The Gospels must be true. They were drawn from a living original. The character of Jesus is not a fiction. He was what he claimed to be and what his followers attested. Nor is this all. Jesus not only was, he is still, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. He has entered the heaven to which he always looked forward on earth. There he lives and reigns. With a clear, calm faith I see him in that state of glory, and I confidently expect, at no distant period, to see him face to face. We have indeed no absent friend whom we shall so surely see. Let us then, by imitation of his virtues and obedience to his word, prepare ourselves to join him in those pure mansions where he is surrounding himself with the good and the pure, and will communicate to them for ever his own spirit and power and joy."

(17.) Theodore Parker, leader of the radicals, says, "Jesus combines in himself the sublimest precepts and divinest practices, thus more than realizing the dream of



prophets and sages. He puts away the doctors of the law, subtle, learned, irrefragable, and pours out a doctrine beautiful as the light, sublime as heaven, and true as God. The philosophers, the poets, the prophets, the rabbis—he rises above them all. That mightiest heart that ever beat, stirred by the Spirit of God, how it wrought in his bosom! What words of rebuke, of comfort, counsel, admonition, promise, hope, did he pour out! words that stir the soul as summer dews call up the faint and sickly grass. What profound instruction in his proverbs and discourses! What wisdom in his homely sayings, so rich with Jewish life! What deep divinity of soul in his prayers, his action, sympathy, resignation! Eighteen centuries have passed since the tide of humanity rose so high. What man, what sect, what church, has mastered his thought, comprehended his method, and so fully applied it to life? Let the world answer in its cry of anguish. Measure him by the shadow he has cast into the world—no, by the light he has shed upon it. Shall we be told that such a man never lived? Suppose that Newton never lived. But who did his works? and thought his thoughts? It takes a Newton to forge a Newton. *What man could have fabricated a Jesus? None but Jesus.*”

VIII. The two witnesses who remain have been foremost leaders of modern unbelief.

(18.) David Strauss, the author of the mythical theory of the story of Jesus—perhaps the most conspicuous figure in recent German thought. A few years ago he was buried without a prayer or word of Christian song. He says, “If in Jesus the union of self-consciousness with the consciousness of God has been real, and expressed not only in words but actually revealed in all the conditions of his life, *he represents within the religious sphere the*

*highest point, beyond which humanity cannot go—yea, whom it cannot equal, inasmuch as every one who hereafter should climb to the same height could only do so with the help of Jesus who first attained it. He remains the highest model of religion within our thought, and no perfect piety is possible without his presence in the heart."*

(19.) Ernest Renan, author of the legendary theory. He rejected the supernatural from the gospel record. His romantic biography of Jesus concludes in these words, "Repose now in thy glory, noble founder! Henceforth, beyond the reach of frailty, thou shalt witness, from the heights of divine peace, the infinite results of thy work. For thousands of years the world will defend thee! Thou shalt be the banner about which the hottest battle will be given . . . Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus."

In view of these concessions made by the leading representatives of unbelief all along the centuries, it is submitted that thoughtful people cannot pause in a partial or qualified rejection of Jesus Christ.

(A.) As to his person. Was he man? Ay, grandly so. But he was either less than a true man or more. His enemies themselves being witnesses, he was either an impostor or the Divine Man, as he claimed to be.

(B.) As to his character. He was the one bright particular star in a firmament of imperfect lights. He alone is worthy to be the exemplar of character, for he alone meets the conditions of the ideal manhood.

(C.) As to his teaching. There have been other sacred

teachers—Seneca, Confucius, Zoroaster, Sakya-Muni—but these were in comparison with him as glow-worms to the noonday sun. Never man spake like this Man.

(D.) As to his work. “He went about doing good.” And since his crucifixion he has continued the building up of a kingdom of truth and righteousness on earth. Its outward form is the church, “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”

(E.) As to the manner of his death. Ah, here the mystery thickens! Here the power converges. Under his cross we learn the truth, justice, holiness, and mercy of the living God. And here Christ comes into vital relation with our souls. Our God is the God of salvation.

What therefore shall we say? As for me, I do believe this Jesus is destined to reign even unto the ends of the earth. The story of his church is an unbroken record of triumph. The government is upon his shoulders. He is King over all and blessed for ever.

What more? As for me, this Christ shall be my Saviour. Shall he be yours? To doubting Thomas he said, “Reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing.” We have stood in the presence of his foes; we have listened to their words concerning him. Faint praise, indeed! and intended, oftentimes, to pierce as sharp arrows. We have thrust our fingers into the wounds of the perfect One. Oh let us be faithless no more, but believing! His enemies themselves being his judges, he is chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely. By their testimony he is proven to be worthy of our love and devotion. Let us therefore, like Thomas, all doubts dispelled, fall before him, crying, “My Lord and my God!”

## THE CHURCH AND THE PEOPLE.

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"And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."—Luke 14:23.

THE holy life is set forth as a feast. It is a feast of fat things and wine upon the lees. All things are ready; abundant provision has been made; the invitations are sent out. But, strange to tell, no one accepts. All with one consent begin to make excuse. "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused." There spoke the prosperous man, whose field was a competence and who had no need of spiritual things. "I have purchased five yoke of oxen, and am going to try them; I pray thee have me excused." There spoke the busy man, whose devotions were hindered by his cares. "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." There spoke the happy man, who suffered the best of earth's blessings to stand between him and heaven. All excuses are bad. Nothing should keep a sinner from the feast of God.

All declined the invitation. Every one of us, without exception, if we were left to ourselves, would remain away from God; but, blessed be his name, he worketh in us of his own good pleasure to draw us heavenward. He moves us by the sweet constraints of love.

"Why was I made to hear his voice  
And enter while there's room,  
While thousands make a wretched choice  
And rather starve than come?"

“’T was the same love that spread the feast  
That sweetly forced me in,  
Else I had still refused to taste  
And perished in my sin.”

We turn our attention to the multitude who are out among the highways and the hedges.

The lapsed masses, the unchurched people—they are in all points by nature such as we. They have a common birth, a common experience of joy or sorrow, a common destiny. They have the same longing at the bottom of their hearts for everlasting life ; but they have a quarrel with the church, and, alas, a quarrel with God ! Who are they ?

First, an army of tramps and other disreputables. Tens of thousands of them are walking our streets at night, ill-clad, hungry, friendless, penniless, with no place to rest their aching bones, many of them sodden with drink, many ready for any desperate deed. These are the submerged tenth. “Submerged !” Significant word ; they strangle in the overwhelming flood of sin and shame. Yet every one of them was born to noble things and is capable of upbuilding into the likeness of God.

Second, a vast proportion of the artisan class, the industrious middle class who are the very bone and sinew of the prosperity of our land. In some way they are largely alienated from the church. Is it possible that we have put Christ away from them ? Have we forgotten that Jesus was a carpenter ? On the walls and chancels of our great cathedrals we have pictured him as the Holy Child in Mary’s arms, with a circle of light about his head, as the boy Christ in the midst of the learned doctors, as the wayfarer going about doing good, as the Redeemer in the anguish of the cross, as the Conqueror of death



ascending into the heavens, and always and everywhere with that luminous halo about his head. Would it not be better to paint him as the carpenter in his shop, the implements of his trade about him, chips and shavings around his feet, weary with the day's toil, wiping the perspiration from his brow? Would it not be better to omit the halo and put a workman's cap upon his head? In that direction lies the success of the propaganda among the working classes who are the dependence of the nations. We can get on without the paupers, though God knows we fain would win them to his glory; we can get on without the millionaires, though their souls are beyond price in the Father's eyes; but we cannot get on without the men who till the fields and fell the forests and wield the industries of the world.

Third, the lapsed aristocracy. The church has seemed oblivious of the fact that in our great metropolitan centres, and notably on Manhattan Island, a centrifugal drift has long been going on which has carried off a great number of our homekeepers. Their places have been taken by a greater number of eminently respectable people who dwell in our splendid apartment-houses or in palatial suites in magnificent hotels. These have thrown off the responsibilities of domestic life, and with them have largely absolved themselves, alas, from the responsibilities of the sanctuary. A large proportion of this class is prayerless and practically godless. The Sunday newspaper is their Sabbath soporific. If they go to church it is as Bedouins, not as regular worshippers. Of all the unchurched multitudes, for obvious reasons, these people are the most difficult to reach. The church has not yet recognized the claims of this lapsed aristocracy. It is high time that God's people should go out and constrain them to come in.



How shall these various classes of unchurched people be reached? The key of the situation is in two watch-words, "The Old Gospel" and "New Methods."

I. The Old Gospel. There is no improvement here. None is possible in the nature of the case. Human nature is a constant factor. We have the same wants, longings, aspirations, that our fathers had. And the same gospel is needed to meet them. This gospel is briefly summed up in three facts.

(1.) Sin. Sin everywhere, dark, abominable, corrupting, damning, all-pervasive, ending in spiritual and eternal death. Any attempt to tone down the character of sin is sure to result in inefficiency. The people must come to-day as they have always needed to come, beating upon their breasts and crying, God be merciful!

(2.) Salvation. The cross is ever in the midst. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

(3.) Sanctification. The agent in sanctification is the Holy Ghost, the medium is Scripture. So Christ prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." It is said in certain quarters now that Christianity is not a religion of a book. But Christ made it so. "Search the Scriptures," he said, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." A loss of confidence in the Scriptures means a loss of power. A slighted Bible means debility and enervation. A lost Bible means absolute and utter weakness. A minister of the gospel who cannot in all honesty commend the old-fashioned Book as an infallible rule of faith and practice will not be able to convict, convert, or build up character.

Let us therefore, if we would win the multitudes, hold fast to the Scriptures as the veritable word of God.

II. New Methods. Principles are eternal, but the forces for their application must be adjusted to the times. Truth is the same for ever, but new methods are needed for its promulgation. The Bible is the same for ever, yet that was a great truth that John Robinson uttered at the embarkation of the pilgrims, "New light shall ever more burst forth from the Word of God." Christ is the same always, yet history sheds an ever-increasing splendor upon his face and gives a greater glory to his presence.

(1.) We need more zeal than ever. Our earnestness must be abreast of this age. When men travelled by land in coaches and by sea in galleons the church might pursue her work with corresponding deliberation, but now she must adjust her plans to those of universal industry. If other people are diligent in business, we should be more. The Lord himself at the outset of his ministry said, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for he hath anointed me to work wonders and preach the gospel to the poor." By the same token we are anointed, consecrated by the Spirit, to the building up of the kingdom of truth and righteousness. It behooves us to rest not day nor night until we have done our utmost to accomplish it.

(2.) We need a closer touch with the people. Our Lord had an intense sympathy with the cares and troubles of the masses. He had compassion on the multitude. He felt for the rich; beholding the young ruler, he loved him. He felt for the poor and championed their rights. In many a poverty-stricken home, this bitter winter's day, there are mothers kneeling with their little children about them and praying with a desperate fervor that we can scarcely apprehend, "Give us this day our daily bread."

The heart of Christ's church must ever throb in response to human want. In the troublous times of the French Revolution a speaker in the Corps Legislatif asked, "Why do not our great men, our priests and philosophers, move and save the people?" A solemn voice replied, "Because they are cast in bronze." We who profess the service of Christ shall never win the multitudes until our hearts are clearly responsive to all their appeals for the betterment of body and soul.

(3.) A broader sweep. All the while we are tempted to narrow the application of the gospel. We are warned away from the domain of civil life. We are admonished not to meddle overmuch with commercial ethics. But the gospel has to do with everything that can affect human life and citizenship. We must not be warned off. The gospel has to do with the physical and metaphysical, with science and politics and sociology, with municipal reform, with home life and social life. Its lines are gone out into all the world and there is nothing hid from the light thereof. The gospel is the most universally diffused, freest, most unbindable and irrepressible thing in the universe. It claims a boundless range, an infinite latitude. No man nor government nor ecclesiastical judicatory must be permitted to place bands or fetters upon it. In behalf of the multitude it must be allowed to concern itself with all projects that have to do with the physical and moral uplifting of the race.

(4.) An open door. Much that is said against the system of renting pews in our churches is ill-grounded and fallacious. There is no good reason why we should not have our "family pews." But there is a theory of pew-renting which is utterly abominable; to wit, that because a man rents a pew he owns it in fee simple and

holds an exclusive right to it. This giveth an evil savor in the nostrils of God. All pews must be taken under the conditions of Christian hospitality. If a man feels bound by common courtesy to admit the stranger who stands at the doorway of his home, he surely has no right to close his pew-door and keep the stranger waiting in the vestibule. The courtesy of the sanctuary should be upon as high a level as the courtesy of the home. And let it ever be remembered that the sanctuary is not the house of the pew-holder, but the house of God.

(5.) A going out. A paper was recently read in a ministerial association, "The Secret of Winning the Masses." There is no secret about it. The Lord made the whole thing plain long ago. He marked out the plan of campaign. As to foreign missions he said, "Go ye into all lands and preach my gospel," and as to home missions he said, "Go ye out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in." In any case and always, "Go." It is not enough to build churches and invite the people to come in. We must go out and constrain them. Paul won Macedonia when he went out after it. Hans Egede won Greenland when he went out after it. The Salvation Army is winning the unchurched multitudes because it is going out after them. Christ won the world because he laid aside the robes of heaven and went out after it. The church will win when it leaves its cloistered retirement and goes forth to win.

(6.) We must keep our singers in front. There is quite too much of melancholy in our methods. "Go down against the enemy," said Jahaziel, "and be not dismayed, for the Lord will be with you." At daybreak the army went forth with the singers in front, who as they marched sang, "Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth

for ever." A great victory was the result, so that they were three days gathering the spoil.

We speak sometimes as if the multitudes were really drifting away from God ; it is not true. Much remains to be done, indeed, but there are more people in the Lord's house to-day than ever before in the history of the world. At the close of the first century there were only five hundred thousand Christians ; at the close of the fifth century there were fifteen millions ; at the close of the tenth, fifty millions ; at the close of the fifteenth, one hundred millions ; at the close of the eighteenth, two hundred millions ; we have not reached the close of the nineteenth century, and there are more than four hundred million adherents to the religion of Christ. Surely we have reason to thank God and take courage. Everything is going right. The Master's house shall be full, the feast is certain to be thronged with guests. The only question is whether you and I shall be there, and how many happy guests will feast themselves at that richly loaded table, under the smile of the Glorious Host, because we have gone out and compelled them to come in.

## THE CHURCH IN THE CATACOMBS.

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"They wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth." Heb. 11:38.

It is a rare thing for a son to appreciate his inheritance. The father earns his wealth by driving a plough or shoving a plane; his son, chasing thistledown, squanders it. "Easy come, easy go." It holds true also in spiritual things. The fathers of the church labored, and we have entered into their labors. We sit in our pleasant sanctuaries and worship God with none to molest us or make us afraid, but oh this freedom was purchased originally at a great price! We shall love it the more fervently and cherish it the more zealously when we reflect how our forebears wrought, toiled, and suffered to secure it.

An important part of the story is to be learned from the catacombs of Rome. These excavations in the *tufa*, or soft volcanic rock which underlies the imperial city, were probably made by quarry-men. The galleries are three or four feet wide, winding in and out on different levels, crossing and recrossing, a distance of four hundred miles in all, or greater than from end to end of Italy. On either side are shelves or niches for the dead. Here are more than three million graves. It is a vast subterranean city of the dead — dark, lonely, dismal beyond expression, the silence of death over all. This was the rude cradle of the infant church.

On the night of July 16, A. D. 64, a great conflagration swept over the city of Rome, burning fiercely for six



days and destroying ten of its fourteen wards. This was regarded as a manifestation of the anger of the gods. They must be appeased; a sacrifice must be found. How natural that the lot should fall upon the lowly Christians. The imperial word went out against them; "they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were slain with the sword." Whither should they flee? To the catacombs. In these dark galleries they found a near and safe retreat. And here they were wont to resort for a period of three centuries, during the persecutions under the successive emperors, under Domitian and Trajan and that excellent Marcus Aurelius who divided his time betwixt a philosophy of sweetness and light and the slaughter of God's little ones.

Imagine the life of the early Christians in this desolate retreat. They uttered their prayers in low voices, listening for the footfall of pursuers, and while they bowed in their small chapels under the flickering gleam of lamps placed in the burial niches round about, they heard the low rumble of the chariot-wheels overhead, telling how the bravery and beauty of Rome were hastening to the Coliseum, perhaps to witness the heroic death of some of their loved ones. At night the mangled bodies of the dead were stealthily brought to them and were put away in their narrow resting-places. But these were glorious days, the seedtime of heroism from which we gather the harvests of peace. The hymns they sang were in the spirit of heroic resignation to God's sovereign will. Here is one which has come down to us:

"Tear as you will this mangled frame,  
Prone to mortality;  
But think not, man of blood, to tame  
Or take revenge on me.

"This, which you labor to destroy  
 With so much madness, so much rage,  
 Is but a vessel formed of clay,  
 Brittle, and hastening to decay.  
 Let nobler foes your arms employ;  
 Subdue the indomitable soul;  
 Which, when fierce whirlwinds rend the sky,  
 Looks on in calm security  
 And bows to God's control."

We may gain an insight into the life and character of these early believers from the symbols which were carved in their underground chapels and on the sepulchres of their dead.

I. One of the most familiar symbols is the *fish*. It gets its significance from the fact that the letters of the Greek word *ichthus*, meaning fish, are the initials of the words *Ιησους Χριστος Θεου Υιος Σωτηρ*, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour. It was not safe to place the name of Jesus on the sepulchres of those who believed in him, but here was a cipher which could be used to mark their narrow homes. And how significant of heroic constancy! These people had left everything for Jesus; homes, possessions, sweet associations—all were gone. Christ only remained for them. He was their Alpha and Omega now.

It is a curious fact in this connection that among the inscriptions in the catacombs there is not one to indicate that any special reverence was paid to the Virgin Mary. Rome is the centre of Mariolatry to-day; yet in these galleries beneath the Vatican, where three centuries of the earliest Christian life are outlined, there is no *Ave Maria*. Is it not noteworthy that the church lived three centuries here and left on every side the story of her devotion to Jesus, yet no word or syllable to authenticate the Mariolatrous litany of the Romish Church! It was

not until the believers had passed the heroic period of their history that the words began to be heard, "Holy Mother of God, pray for us!"

II. Another symbol used in the catacombs is the *cross*. It is met with everywhere, in the little chapels where the living were wont to worship and on the sepulchres of the dead. To these refugees of the early church the cross meant everything. It was the eloquent token of their spiritual life. By it the Saviour had brought life and immortality to light for them. We, alas, have abandoned the symbol. I venture the opinion that at this point the pendulum of the Reformation, in receding from superstition, has swung too far the other way. Why should not the cross of Jesus Christ adorn the walls of our churches? Why should it not tower aloft from our spires?

To the Christians of the catacombs it was an emblem full of the power of life. It spoke to them not merely of the Saviour's death, but of their own fellowship with it. They knew what it was to die daily for Jesus' sake. They had indeed taken up the cross to follow him. In these piping times of peace we can but dimly apprehend its full meaning. Yet then, as evermore, the way of the cross is the way of spiritual and eternal life—" *Via crucis via lucis.*"

"Must I be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease,  
While others fought to win the prize  
And sailed through bloody seas?

"Sure I must fight if I would reign;  
Increase my courage, Lord!  
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,  
Supported by thy word."

III. A third symbol which frequently occurs in the catacombs is the *anchor*. "Which hope we have as an

anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." The life of these heroic believers was indeed a stormy voyage; but they had with them a safe chart and a steadfast anchor, and looked on towards a final and eternal haven of rest. "A passage perilous maketh a port pleasant."

There is no evidence to show that the life of these dwellers in the catacombs was enveloped in gloom. On the other hand they were cheery and bright-hearted. On one of the chapel walls there is written:

"There is light in this darkness;  
There is music in these tombs."

It is easy for us to say, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;" but oh how full of significance that assurance must have been to those sufferers for the truth's sake! To them the present was a hand's-breadth, the future was illuminated with a regal splendor; a moment here, eternity yonder; affliction now, glory for ever. On the sepulchres of their loved ones they inscribed *Dormit*. To sleep suggests an awakening. "If he sleep, he shall do well." For them weeping might endure for a night, but joy was sure to come in the morning. In the morning they would awake in the likeness of their Lord; in the morning they would clasp hands with those who had gone before them.

IV. Yet another of the symbols in the catacombs was the *palm-branch*. Its significance is shown from the fact that beside it are frequent portrayals of hooks and forceps and iron combs for tearing the flesh. The palm-branch is the mark of the martyr's grave. There are multitudes of tombs thus designated where those lie resting of whom

“the world was not worthy.” The Dreamer in the desert island saw these multitudes in the upper realms. “After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth upon the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Rev. 7:9-17.)

The end of this long story of tribulation came in the year 404 A. D., on this wise. A great triumph was being celebrated in Rome. The Coliseum was filled with an expectant multitude. The games were under way. The rope-dancing, the bear-baiting, the performing elephants, the foot-races, the chariot-races were followed by the play of Orpheus, in which the hero was doomed to the beasts. This gave the people their taste for blood. The gladiators were called for and came forth—*Ave Cæsar! morituri te salutamus!* They crossed swords and went down one by one, the people gloating furiously over every

death. All this was witnessed by brave knights and centurions, by vestal virgins and by mothers and little children. But the choicest of the sports was yet to come. A clamorous cry was heard—"The Christians to the lions!" And while the arena was being strewn with fresh sand, a rude man sprang over the barriers into the open circus, bareheaded, barefooted, and signalled to the weary gladiators, waiting on their swords, to fall back. "Oh, ye people!" he cried, "cease from the shedding of blood. There is a God above; take heed!" There was a moment of silence, and then the fury of the populace broke forth and the cry arose to the gladiators, "Cut him down!" He folded his hands and lifted his face in prayer. A moment later his mangled body lay upon the sand; but the face of the nameless monk was seen afterwards in dreams. His life had not been squandered; that was the last fight in the Coliseum. Not long afterwards the decree of toleration was issued, and the Christians came forth out of their hiding-places and praised God for the right to worship him.

How long ago it all seems! What wonders have been wrought since then! Let us come forth out of the catacombs and look around us. Here are the seven hills; yonder is the desolate Campagna; the sluggish tide of the Tiber still rolls by. The Forum is there, but its columns all are crumbling and the voices of its mighty ones are hushed. Yonder on the Palatine was Nero's golden house; and Nero's gardens were just over there, lit once by living torches, the Christians smeared with pitch and fired to illuminate the revels. In the midst of Nero's gardens now rises the magnificent St. Peter's, the golden cross upon its dome shining red in the light of the setting sun. And the Flavian amphitheatre which rang with the



cry, "*Ad leones!*" its walls are broken and gray and solitude pervades it. On yonder arch of Titus is the figure of the golden candlestick carried away in triumph by Jehovah's foes; but He that standeth in the midst of the golden candlestick hath triumphed over all. Above the monument of Titus' victory there arises another arch spanning the heavens and the earth from sea to sea, a bow of promise painted with all the colors of glory and formed by the Sun of heaven shining through the tempest of history; and lo, there is a cry, "Hosanna! hosanna! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" The heavens rend asunder; He draws near whose right it is to reign, clothed with the sun, crowned with a diadem of stars, behind him a retinue of angels praising him and saying, Thou art worthy to receive power and dominion and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing for ever and ever!

I have read somewhere of a Roman soldier, a veteran, scarred and crippled, who, hearing over the distant hills the dull sounds of battle, buckled on his sword and struggled with swift stumbling steps towards the field, praying to the gods at every step that he might live to mingle in the fray once more.

O beloved in Christ, the great Armageddon is being fought to-day. God through the centuries, working through his militant church, has been hastening on the fatal consummation. Let us crave the honor of fighting at the fore, let us win the service chevron by lending all our powers to the heroic struggle for the upbuilding of the kingdom of truth and righteousness, for the hastening of the triumph of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

## A BUSY MAN'S BLUNDER.

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"And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone."

I Kings 20:40.

AHAB was a wicked king and a weak one. He had a divine commission to destroy Syria. Every man has a commission of some sort; his life-work is to discharge it. But Ahab was busy about other things. He was adorning his palace; he was introducing a new state-religion; he was perfecting an elaborate cultus; he was dallying with strange pleasures. The king of Syria came up meanwhile and laid siege to Samaria, his capital city. A prophet, probably Micaiah, Ahab's good genius, said, "Now is your opportunity, O king; seize it." The enemy was in his power; there had been a protracted debauch and Ben-hadad was sodden with drink. "Hast thou seen all this multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into thy hand this day, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord." Then Ahab went out against the besiegers and put them to flight; but unfortunately the pursuit was not followed up. He went back, congratulating himself on his momentary success. Meanwhile the Syrian king, having recovered from his inebriety, called his councillors together. They said, "The God of the Israelites is a God of the mountains: go out against them and entice them into the plains." In pursuance of this advice he rallied his army for another assault. Then the prophet came again to Ahab and said, "Thou hast another opportunity. Thus saith the Lord, 'Because Ben-hadad has said, The God of the Israelites is the God of the hills and not of the valleys,

go out against him, and thou shalt know that I am God.' ” Then followed another terrible battle, in which the Syrians were overwhelmed ; the ground was covered with their dead. Ben-hadad and his body-guard of lieutenants and commanders, after hiding for a season, came out and surrendered with sackcloth on their loins and ropes around their necks. Then Ahab, soft-hearted, vainglorious, unmindful of his great commission, proud of showing favor to the illustrious power of Syria, spared his royal captive. He called him “My brother;” he invited him into his chariot ; he entered into an alliance with him. So he lost his advantage and fell short of his opportunity ; like a truant boy who goes bird-nesting when he ought to be plodding through the rule of three.

The Lord is a persistent teacher, and if it be possible will teach Ahab yet. Now it is by an acted parable. As the king sits in his council-chamber a sorely wounded soldier enters. He is under sentence of death and begs for mercy. This is the story he tells : “O my lord, I went forth into the midst of battle and a captive was brought unto me by one who said, ‘Keep him ; if he escape, thy life for his life ;’ and while I was busy here and there, absorbed in the interest of that fierce hour, carried away by the enthusiasm of conflict, lo he was gone !” The king cast upon him an angry glance, saying, “So shall thy judgment be ; thou hast spoken it ; away to thy death !” Then the soldier threw off his disguise and stood forth in the prophet’s garb. It was Micaiah. “O king, be it unto thee as thou hast said : thou art the culprit ; to thee was entrusted a great commission ; thou mightest have made for thyself an immortal name in the chronicles of Israel ; the opportunity was thine ; thou hast lost it. Busy about thine own affairs, thou hast forgotten thy

nobler tasks; the judgment hath gone forth, the kingdom shall be taken from thee."

I speak to busy men and women. The streets are thronged with an eager, hurrying crowd, busy, all busy, each in his own province eager to win success. We live in a busy age, a busy land, a busy city. There is no rest. The very children on their way to school seem over-eager. The brows which are presently to be furrowed with the sorrow of increasing years are already knit with care. All are intent on getting on in the world.

What is the secret of success? Sir Walter Scott said, "If you would succeed, beware of dawdling." There is little danger of dawdling in our tense American life. Beware rather of over-eagerness in the sordid affairs of life; beware of squandering the vital forces; beware of burning life's candle at both ends.

One of our recent millionaires said, "The secret of success is to do one thing." No, this were to attain but the briefest and the narrowest success. Do two things and do them well, for we are creatures of two worlds. We must needs attend to the affairs of the shop and the office, the *brod-und-butterschaft*, and we must never forget the higher tasks. The carpenter of Nazareth did honest work at his bench, but all the while his heart was saying, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how my soul is straitened until I shall accomplish it!" Be faithful, O friend, in the common duties of this lower world; but oh remember that to seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness is first of all.

Jules Simon says, "The secret of success is to be free. If one is free, soul and body, he can do whatsoever he will." True indeed. Down at the prison-house at Gaza the strong man, blind and fettered, is grinding at the mill.

The heavens are blue above him, the fields are verdant, the vineyards on the hillsides are purpling for the vintage; but, alas, he sees it not, his eyes are out; the task-master stands over him crying, "Grind on!" The merry-makers are dancing; little children laugh as they pass by; it is nothing to him. Grind on! Grind on! So many a man lives, bound to the tasks of his shop or office, seeing no visions, though the windows of heaven are open above him, and having no interest in the nobler pursuits of life around him, for ever grinding at the mill, all his powers absorbed in the accomplishing of some narrow, selfish end, a mean ambition holding over him a whip of scorpions and crying, "Grind on!" until at last, with groping, tremulous hands, he finds the pillars, and life, like Dagon's temple, comes crashing down upon him. O God, open our blind eyes, break off our fetters, and for the accomplishing of our important tasks give us that glorious freedom with which the truth makes free!

I say therefore to you, busy men and women, cumbered with serving, absorbed in the round of earthly cares, stop and think. Give yourselves time and opportunity to dwell upon the great issues which reach on for ever. Loose yourselves from the bands of sensual servitude, lift your eyes from the muck-rake affairs, the getting and hoarding of this world. Stop and think.

Think of what?

I. I live for ever; think of that. The moth flies in at the window, circles about the candle, singes its poor wings, flutters and dies. The eagle mounts upward, kindling its eyes at the sun of heaven; an arrow pierces it—it falls and dies. A lion roams the forest, falls into the pit which the hunter has prepared for it, struggles in vain, roars in its strong agony and dies. And man—he lives, bears his

burdens, meets his responsibilities, bows under his sorrows, dreams dreams and sees visions, hopes, suffers, agonizes and—dies? Oh no. His friends bend over him and say the man is dead; but he lives—lives on for ever. His body returns to the earth as it was, but his spirit to God who gave it.

And in this he has dominion over all lower forms of being. He shares the immortality of that God who breathed into his nostrils the breath of an endless life. The everlasting hills shall crumble to their bases, the last blade of grass shall wither in the verdant fields, the last drop of water shall be exhaled from the ocean, the world shall be burned until it is scorched and barren as yon ruined moon, the heavens themselves shall be rolled up as a parched scroll, the last star in the firmament shall blink like a sleepy eye and then be quenched; but you and I, children of the immortal God, shall live on for ever and for ever.

Do you ask proof of immortality? It is forthcoming, not from the preacher's lips, but in the voice of the angel that dwells in every human soul. Ask of yourself, "If a man die shall he live again?" and hear from within the answer, "I shall live and not die."

The fisherman loves his boat. It has shared with him the dangers of the stormy sea. He loves its tiller, the oars worn by the heavy grasp of his calloused hands. But after a while its seams gap open and his boat wears out. He draws it up upon the sands and goes on plying his trade in a new boat. I am the boatman, my body is the boat; my body, worn out at last, is beached, but I toil on.

II. Life here is the key of life hereafter. Stop and think of that. Death is important, not as being the end



of life, but rather as being its commencement. Death ends probation, that is all. It marks the crystallization of character. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

The penalty of faithlessness is to lose one's opportunity of reaching the noble end. No pain of retribution can be more terrible than that which was involved in the Master's curse upon the barren tree: "No man eat fruit of thee for ever!" This is to lose one's life, to lose the noblest and blessedest part of it.

The reward of faithfulness is promotion to higher tasks. He that is faithful in a little shall be made to rule over ten cities. With powers enlarged, with possibilities and opportunities multiplied, we shall go on doing good and serving God through the endless ages.

Death determines whether the penalty of faithlessness or the reward of faithfulness shall be accorded to us. On the night when John Bradford was sentenced to death the jailer's wife came running in and said, "O Mr. Bradford, I bring thee heavy tidings! To-morrow thou diest! The men are even now gathering the fagots for the fire." He answered, "Good dame, why tremblest? What matters it whether I die to-morrow or the day after? I am quite ready."

III. Duty is the principal thing. Here is something worthy of your attention. Stop and think of it.

Duty is the thing which is due. To whom?

(1.) To one's self. It is a matter of the utmost moment that a man shall make the most of himself. That was a gracious word which was spoken by Norman MacLeod in old Barony Kirk in his eulogy of Prince Albert,

"The most valuable thing he left was character." And, indeed, the good prince could scarcely have left a more valuable thing.

(2.) Duty is what we owe to others. The old poet Daniel said wisely,

"Unless he can  
Erect himself above himself,  
How poor a thing is man."

It behooves us all as well-meaning people to do good as we have opportunity unto all men.

(3.) The summit of duty is what we owe to God. Not merely to worship him, but to live for his glory. There is no more beautiful ruin than Melrose Abbey; its outlines are so graceful, its sculptures so delicate. Climb up along its columns and look in between the scrolls of its capitals, and you shall see that all its carvings, even where there was no probability that any human eye should see, are almost as delicate as lace. It means that the devout old monks and other workmen wrought as being mindful that God would see. Oh that we might thus be ever living as under the great Taskmaster's eye! All that we do, though it be only to eat or drink, should be done to the glory of God.

These are thoughts to dwell upon amid the hurry of our daily life. Let us look forth as from the windows of a high tower upon the blessed things of the far country; let us be mindful that our life here is only a hand-breadth, while its issues reach on through countless ages.

Life is our prisoner. Alas! if we should lose it. "For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in

exchange for his life?"\* Have you wasted it thus far? The blood cleanseth: be forgiven and let the past suffice for the working of the will of the flesh. Now begin to live. Lord Bacon said many wise things, but never a wiser than this: "Not to resolve is to resolve not." To postpone the great decision is to refuse to make it—yes, even worse, is to decide against God and heaven and eternal blessedness.

"To-morrow! and to-morrow! and to-morrow!  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day  
Till the last syllable of recorded time,  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death."

If these considerations seem just and weighty, let us act upon them; if in our past life we have neglected the important things of eternity, let us trifle no longer, let us be wise to-day.

\* Revised Version.

## THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

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"And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon him: and there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." MARK I:9-11.

"IN those days"—that is, in the days of the world's despair. The lights were gone out in the sanctuary. There was no more open vision. The oracles were dumb. The gods, exposed and derided, had fallen from their pedestals and lay with their faces in the dust. The philosophers were put to an open shame. The rabbis of Israel were chattering about mint and anise and cummin. The people had settled down into confessed and hopeless apathy.

The spirit of the age found expression in such questions as, Is there a God? What is truth? If a man die, will he live again? Is there anything better than to eat, drink, and be merry?

"On that hard pagan world disgust  
And sated loathing fell;  
Deep weariness and sated lust  
Made human life a hell.

"In his cool hall with haggard eyes  
The Roman noble lay,  
He drove abroad in furious guise  
Along the Appian Way.

He made a feast, drank fierce and fast,  
And crowned his hair with flowers ;  
No easier nor no quicker passed  
The impracticable hours."

In those days there was a carpenter in the town of Nazareth who was destined to wield the sceptre of the ages. He was waiting for the fulness of time, and meanwhile he wrought steadily at his lower tasks. The farmer came with his wooden plough, the village dame with her decrepit furniture, and he mended them. The children of the village passed by his door ; he smiled upon them, spoke a cheery word, and they went their way. As he stood among the shavings, plying the implements of his trade, he must oftentimes have murmured, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how is my soul straitened until it shall be accomplished !"

In those days came John the Baptist, preaching and saying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Out of the wilderness, clad in a prophet's garb, with a hempen cord about his loins, a gaunt, stern man, he came announcing the coming of the Christ. "The woodman cometh," he cried, "with an axe in his hand, and he will lay it at the root of the tree, and every barren tree shall be cut down and cast into the fire." "The winnower cometh," he cried, "with fan in hand, and he shall surely purge the floor and the chaff shall be cast into unquenchable fire." A strange gospel this, a strange heralding of the Prince of Peace—the axe, the fan, and always the unquenchable fire ! Repent ye ! repent ye ! for He cometh whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to loose.

The air is close and heavy before the storm ; the skies are yellow ; we struggle for breath. Then comes

the tempest; the clouds sweep overhead, the winds roar through the forest like voices of fury; the trees are twisted and torn, the windows above are opened; the skies are seamed with lurid lightnings, like knotted and swollen veins upon an angry face. Then comes the lull of the tempest, calm and silence, sunshine and the singing of birds, and you throw your shoulders back and breathe; the whole world is brighter and better for the storm. So came John the Baptist preaching of the axe and the winnowing-fan and preparing the way for the Prince of Peace.

One day he was baptizing at the water's edge at Bethabara. The bank of the swift Jordan was lined with the eager multitudes who had come thronging from Jerusalem and Judæa, the regions round about. "Repent ye! repent ye!" rang his voice above the roar of the swift-rolling, tumultuous river. "Cast up a highway for the coming of the King!" One and another of his hearers came down to the water's edge, saying, "I repent; baptize me." The day waned; it was towards eventide. Then one detached himself from the crowd and came down towards the river—a man of the people in homespun garb, before whom the prophet of the wilderness quailed and trembling cried, "Behold! behold the Lamb of God!"

And as Jesus came near he said, "Not thou, O Master. I am the unworthy one! I have need to be baptized of thee." And Jesus answered, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh me to fulfil all righteousness." Then the heavens were opened above and a blessed commerce began—prayers ascending and blessings returning—which never has ceased until this day. And down from above came the Spirit of God in form like a brooding dove, symbolizing the descent of peace to the sin-troubled world,



and bringing to earth a benediction that passeth all understanding. And a voice was heard, "This is my beloved Son." It was heard afterward, again and again. Some said, "It thundereth," and they spake well, for it was indeed a tremendous truth that was uttered, "This is my beloved Son." O friend, have you ever heard it uttered in reverberating tones from heaven? "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him."

What was the significance of all this? What is the meaning of this baptism of Jesus? It was the formal induction into the active duties of his mediatorial office. He would return to the carpenter's shop no more. In vain shall the farmer bring his plough. Little children will look wonderingly at the closed door. The saw will hang against the wall, the dust lie thick upon the bench, the shavings be undisturbed on the floor. The carpenter of Nazareth has left his lower tasks and entered upon his ministry. The hour has come; his soul shall be straitened no more.

What does this mean for us?

I. To-day he enters with us into the fellowship of duty. Thus it becometh me, he said, to fulfil all righteousness. He was a loyal Jew, and the new economy had not begun as yet. If a son of Levi must be washed at the brazen laver on assuming his ministerial functions, so shall Jesus; but instead of the temple we have the deep valley and the overarching skies; instead of the laver, the swift-flowing Jordan; instead of the anointing, the descent of the dove, the Spirit of God.

This Jesus is the source and centre of all the right precepts and injunctions; his heart is the throne of law; the writings of Sinai are the flashings of his eye; yet under the Law he bows and passes into servitude.

Though equal with God, he took upon him the form of a servant and became obedient. The inaugural rite is his bounden duty ; to obey is better than sacrifice. " Thus it becometh me, as the ideal man, the Son of man, to fulfil all righteousness." If he thus respected the humblest duty, then surely, beloved, the same is becoming in us.

There is no nobler word in all our vocabulary than "duty." Our mere apprehension of moral obligation is the token of our divine lineage. An infant grasps at the stars. No offspring of the lower orders does it. Time passes and the infant, grown to manhood, still reaches for the stars. But they are far away ; and the interstellar spaces are infinite. The province of duty is our vast universe. When we have done our best we must still confess, "I count not myself to have apprehended." The stars are still far away. But this is God-like, to reach forth, to strive after character, to obey, to fulfil all righteousness to the utmost of our power. Jesus revered his duty ; so let us bow to ours.

II. In this ordinance our blessed Lord comes with us into the fellowship of penitence. We mourn sometimes that at the tenderest point of human life and experience he cannot feel with us, for he was human in all points, yet without sin. He could not indeed mourn over personal sin. Of all the multitude that lined the Jordan bank, hearkening to John's call to repentance, he alone could say, "I need it not."

And yet there is a sense in which Jesus can sympathize with our sorrow for sin. He took upon himself the burden of our transgressions ; he identified himself with us in our attitude of guilt before the offended law. He was no sinner, and yet in our behalf he became the very chief of sinners, for the world's sin was laid upon him. He felt

our pain, our contrition, our despair; all that sin entails upon a guilty soul he bore for us.

A strange thing happened recently in one of our courts of justice. A young man was asked if he had aught to say why the extreme penalty should not be passed upon him. At that moment a gray-haired man, his face furrowed with sorrow, stepped into the prisoner's box unhindered, placed his hand affectionately upon the culprit's shoulder, and said, "Your honor, we have nothing to say. The verdict which has been found against us is just. We have only to ask for mercy." "We!"—there was nothing against this old father; yet in that moment he lost himself; he identified his very being with that of his wayward boy.

So Christ in this baptism pushes his way to a place beside us, lays his hand upon the sinner's shoulder, and bears the shame and sorrow with him. Oh presently, up yonder, he will stand beside us; again we shall be silent and shamefaced, but he will speak: "Thou Judge of all the earth, true and righteous altogether, the sentence has gone forth justly against this man; but I have borne his penalty; my heart broke on Calvary under the burden of his sin; for my sake let him go free." So it is written, "He was numbered with the transgressors; he bare the sins of many; the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

III. He enters also in this inaugural ordinance into the fellowship of divine filiation with us. "Thou," said the voice from above, "art my beloved Son." We were alienated from the Heavenly Father; but in the sonship of Jesus the way of restoration is opened unto us. He becomes the first-born among many brethren; in him we receive the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Thanks be to God for this voice of thunder, "Thou art my Son." We have heard it reverberating along the corridors of truth. The scriptures are full of the sonship of Jesus. He walks amid the oracles, his face like the sun shining in his strength. We have heard it in the story of personal experience: the sorrowing Magdalens, the penitent thieves, the weeping Peters of all the centuries, have certified to the grace of the Elder Brother as the only-begotten of God. We have heard it in history. There is a mingled sound of falling thrones and dynasties, of hammers and trowels among the stones of rising temples, of the rustling wings of the angels of the morning, of the singing of the nations that were once in darkness and the shadow of death, like the sound of many waters, like the reverberance of the heavens, "This is my beloved Son." Oh sweet and blessed fellowship! We are his humble brethren, and there is something more in Christ Jesus still before us: "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

The grace of the infinite God came down to earth as Pharaoh's daughter came down to the river side, and found us helpless, motherless, famishing. It has taken us up to the King's house, brought us to the King's table, clothed us in purple, and given us the assurance of a royal inheritance. We also are sons and daughters of the living God. Not like Jesus indeed. Oh! there is a bridgeless gulf between his affiliation with God and ours; he is the "Only-Begotten;" and yet we are acknowledged in the Beloved as children of God. The time will come when the full significance of this will be revealed to us. Meanwhile we pass here our years of apprenticeship; doing faithful work in the province of duty; earnest, steadfast, hopeful; mending ploughs and harrows in the shop, until

one bright day we too shall be called away to hear the voice, "Thou art my beloved son!" Let us bow our backs cheerfully to the burden; let us acquiesce in salutary discipline; let us with lowly heart receive the full blessing of our divine adoption; and oh! let us love with pure hearts, fervently, this Brother of ours by whose mediation we have the great inheritance, whose right hand will presently lead us through the door of the Father's house to the Father's table, where we shall abide as members of the family of God!

## THE PHARISEE'S PRAYER.

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"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." Luke 18: 11, 12.

IF we should be unsaved, the Lord will be blameless. He has wooed us and warned us to the utmost. He has set before us a multitude of exceeding great and precious promises covering the present time and reaching out unto the life everlasting, and he has compassed us about with admonitions. It is written, "A reproof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool." The Lord knew whereof he spake; the traps and the pitfalls of the journey were all known to him. His warnings are like beacons kindled along the way.

Here is one. A man in the night and the solitude is conning his ledger. He congratulates himself on his magnificent profits. "What shall I do?" he murmurs; "my goods are greatly increased. I will tear down my barns and build greater; I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." And a voice breaks in upon his soliloquy, "Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" And what is the lesson? Beware of avarice, of covetousness, of a selfish life.

Here is another of these beacons. A man stands at the corner of the street making his long prayer. Broad



are his ceremonial fringes and conspicuous is the band upon his forehead, upon which is written, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord, thy God, is one Lord." He drops his eyes, he folds his hands. The people who pass by behold him with admiration, saying, "This is a holy man." But the Voice breaks in upon his devotion, "Woe unto thee, O rabbi! praying in order to be seen of men; how shalt thou escape the damnation of hell?" What is the lesson? Take heed and beware of hypocrisy, of wearing a mask and of seeming to be better than thou art.

And here are five virgins, sleeping by the wayside in the flickering light of their expiring lamps. At the cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh!" they arise and rub the slumber from their eyes, trim their lamps, and hasten to the bridegroom's house. Too late! They knock and cry, "Lord! Lord! open unto us!" And the voice from within answers, "I never knew you." And the lesson? Beware of procrastination, of heedlessness, of putting off thy duty. Be wise to-day.

Here is a group of malefactors on their way to execution, their faces fallen upon their breasts, their hands manacled. What have they done? To them was committed the husbandman's estate. The just demand for recompense was refused again and again. At length the Master sent his beloved son, saying, "Surely they will heed him." But they stoned him and cast him out; wherefore they are sentenced to death, and with manifest justice. What will the Master teach thereby? Beware of adding to the category of thy many sins the crowning iniquity of rejecting the King's Son.

So are we admonished again and again by these parabolic figures, clear and impressive as those living torches which Nero cruelly kindled along the Roman ways.

This Pharisee is one of them. His sin was self-righteousness. The Lord spake this parable, as it is written, "unto certain that trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others."

There is danger of passing a too severe judgment on this man. There are some things to be said in his favor,

*First*, he was no hypocrite. Among his co-religionists there were those who pretended to be what they knew they were not. But this man thought himself to be righteous and frankly said so. He would not have been honest otherwise. Had he confessed himself a sinner while believing himself to be a saint, he would have been a hypocrite. God desireth truth in the inmost parts. The meanest of all sins is hypocrisy. It is something to be able to absolve an evil-doer of this.

"God knows I'm no the thing I should be,  
Nor am I e'en the thing I could be;  
But twenty times I rather would be  
An atheist clean,  
Than under gospel colors hid be  
Just for a screen."

*Second*, he was no flagrant malefactor. He was not, as he said, "like other men." Near by stood a money-changer, an extortioner, a very Shylock, wont to devour widows' houses and grind the faces of the poor. "I thank thee, Lord, that I am not like this man." Yonder stood an adulterer, his name bandied about from mouth to mouth, his offence an open scandal against the church. "I thank thee, Lord," said our Pharisee very justly, "that I am not like this man." Off yonder stood a publican, shame-faced, beating on his breast, as well he might, for was he not a wretched renegade, an apostate from Israel? "I thank thee," said our Pharisee again, "that I am not

like this man." Let us give him his utmost due. He avoided the conspicuous vices; he was a moral man.

*Third*, he was no infidel. On the other hand, he was scrupulous in his attendance to the requirements of the ceremonial law. No doubt he occupied one of the highest seats in the synagogue. He was, as we say, a member of the church in good and regular standing. He honored the stated appointments. "I fast twice every week," said he. The law required him to fast only on the great Day of Atonement—just one day in each year—but he accumulated virtue by abstaining from food every Monday and Thursday. "I pay tithes of all I possess." This also was beyond the necessity of the case. The law required only a tithe of the income. This man, however, was known as a great giver—a giver of the tithe of his mint and anise and cummin. In all these things our Pharisee was right in saying that he was not as other men.

*Fourth*, he was thankful. Deep down in his heart he rejoiced in this splendid showing of morality and piety. There are men who feel precisely as he did, but have not the grace to make public acknowledgment of it. That "I thank thee, God," is certainly to the credit of the man who uttered it.

So indeed this Pharisee was not as black as we have oftentimes painted him. As we have seen, there were many things in his favor, and so far as we are aware there was only one thing against him.

We turn now to consider this worshipper's one fault, his self-righteousness. He was a type of a multitude of eminently respectable people who trust in themselves that they are righteous. Let us observe what is involved in this sin.

(1.) Infatuation. The Pharisee was utterly mistaken

as to his real character. He said, "I am not like other men." God said, "There is no difference."

A sinner is a sinner. His respectability does not alter or modify the main fact. At this moment all Paris is disturbed over the conviction of some of its most eminent dignitaries of misappropriating the Panama Canal funds. There is a general outcry against the punishment of these reputable gentlemen. What matters it that they have stolen outright some millions of francs? Are they not gentlemen, cultured, eminent indeed in society? On the outer boulevards the *canaille* are perpetrating their petty thefts, stealing a loaf for their hunger or a ragged garment to cover their nakedness. Away to the prison with them; but as for De Lesseps and Eiffel, let them go! Ah, God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways. There are no respectable sinners in the divine sight. There is no difference: we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

(2.) Uncharitableness. Another element in the self-righteousness of this Pharisee was uncharitableness; as it is written, "He despised others." It takes a rogue to catch a rogue. For a like reason, none but the conscious sinner can feel for his erring brother. A fellow-feeling makes one wondrous kind.

Who was it wrote the "Universal Prayer"?

"Teach me to feel another's woe,  
To hide the fault I see;  
That mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me."

Who but Alexander Pope with his thousand open faults?

Who was it wrote the "Bridge of Sighs"?

“Owning her weakness,  
 Her evil behavior,  
 And leaving, with meekness,  
 Her sins to her Saviour !”

Who but Tom Hood, with his many weaknesses ?

And who was it that wrote the “Address to the unco’ guid” ?

“Then at the balance let’s be mute,  
 We never can adjust it ;  
 What’s done we partly may compute,  
 But know not what’s resisted.”

Who but Robbie Burns, who many a time staggered down the road from Tam O’Shanter’s inn to Alloway cottage ?

We cannot despise others when we know our own infirmities. Find me a complacent moralist, and I will find you a man with no bowels of compassion.

(3.) Mark the Pharisee’s presumption. With respect to himself his self-righteousness was infatuation ; with respect to others it was uncharitableness ; with respect to God it was arrant presumption.

We speak of this Pharisee’s prayer, but he made no prayer. He confessed no fault, no need. “I thank thee, God,” said he, “that I am not as other men.” It was an imposing laudation of self.

The quaint old poet Crashaw puts it thus :

“Two went to pray,  
 Or rather to say,  
 One went to brag—  
 The other to pray.  
 “One stands up close  
 And treads on high  
 Where the other  
 Dares not lend his eye.”

"One nearer to  
God's altar trod,  
The other to  
The altar's God."

The Pharisee's prayer was like a painted ship upon a painted ocean, as fair to outward seeming as any vessel under sail; but its keel cut no furrow in the mighty deep; it carried no wants to the regions beyond and brought back no cargo of gold and spices. The Pharisee knew no sin and therefore asked for no pardon. His righteousness lacked the one thing needful. He had heard of Messiah who was to die in behalf of his people, that they might be delivered from the shame and penalty and bondage of their sins. He had no need, however, for the gracious offices of that Mediator. He was proud of his own attainments and did not perceive that in the sight of the Holy God all his righteousnesses were but as filthy rags.

"One thing thou lackest," said the Saviour to the young ruler. The one thing lacking in his case, as in that of this Pharisee, was the very thing on which salvation is conditioned, to wit: an apprehension of God's pardoning grace. A stowaway, dragged out from behind the casks and bundles in the hold of a vessel, is in no wise worse than a cabin passenger, save only that he lacks a ticket; but therein he lacks the great pre-requisite, in default of which he must needs take his place among the stokers.

O friend, conscious of a noble purpose to live uprightly, yet refusing the strength and guidance of God's own beloved Son, and unshriven for the mislived past, one thing thou lackest! Go, part with everything and win an interest in the Saviour's sacrifice, and then, boastful no longer of thine own righteousness, lean hard on



Him for ever. If thou shalt ever present thyself acceptable at the throne of heaven, it will be, not because of personal merit, but clothed in His righteousness as with fine linen, clean and white.

When we have done our utmost we still fall short of the glory of God. The best of sinners has a reason to cry out at every eventide, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness!" The most immaculate of moralists is still a guilty man.

In its last reduction the only virtue is faith in the Saviour of the world.

"Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding Lamb!  
The true morality is love of Thee."

## THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER.

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"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." Luke 18:13.

OUR Lord gave little attention to the inculcation of abstract truth. He taught in object-lessons, using in large measure the kindergarten method. There was no attempt at the appearance of profundity. He desired to present truth in terms so simple that a wayfaring man, though a fool, might understand it. The truths which are advanced in his gospel are in concrete form and not infrequently formulated in living flesh and blood. This is of advantage for both plainness and picturesqueness.

Here is a woman afflicted with an incurable malady, who, learning that Jesus is passing through the village, makes her way through the crowd in the desperate hope of being healed by his touch. She accomplishes her purpose, lays her hand upon the hem of his garment, and feels with inexpressible joy the sudden thrill of health. What does this mean? Faith. It teaches the power of faith, that is, of personal contact with the Divine, only more effectively than could have been done in an elaborate discourse.

Here is a poor creature rescued from the slums by the encouraging word of Jesus, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." In deep passion of gratitude she brings an alabaster-box of ointment, her most priceless possession, and pours it upon

Jesus' feet, weeping meanwhile and wiping his feet with her flowing hair. And when the disciples would have rebuked her, the Lord said, "Let her alone; she hath wrought a good work on me." What does this mean? Love—love that covereth a multitude of sins. A whole library of elaborate discourses could not have shown its nature so well.

In the court of the temple a poor widow drops two mites into Corban. There are other contributors there, rich men and ostentatious pietists, who throw their golden coins sonorously into the trumpet-mouth of the contribution-box: but of this poor widow the Master said, "She hath given more than they all." What does this mean? The grace of giving. Nor has all the literature on systematic beneficence in these last days covered the case so thoroughly.

A wayfarer as he passes along the "bloody way" that leads from Jerusalem down to Jericho hears a groan and turns aside to answer it. The priests have been along that way and the Levites have given no heed. He finds the suffering one, binds up his wounds, and cares for him. The lesson is benevolence. All that Herbert Spencer and the professors of sociology have contributed to the subject have added little or nothing to this simple and comprehensive outline of true neighborliness.

A thief is dying on the cross. His life has been passed in sin and shame, but he cries in the supreme moment of his anguish and despair, "Lord, remember me!" The answer is, "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Thus briefly does the great Master teach the power of saving grace.

"'Twixt the saddle and the ground,  
Mercy sought is mercy found."

It will be observed that all the foregoing persons were nameless. Names are nothing; the important thing is the virtue that shines through the life. And here in this publican we have another of the anonymi. There is little or nothing attractive about him. He was a pariah, a renegade Jew, a collector of Roman tribute. He was hated and despised—a dog of a publican. He was not allowed to enter the Temple or to testify in the courts of justice. It is a noteworthy fact that tax-collectors are a despised class in Oriental countries to this day. And how they are hated over in Ireland! the factors, the landlord's men; and in Scotland too. Burns pays them his compliments in the "Twa Dogs:—"

"Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,  
How they maun thole a factor's snash:  
He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear,  
He'll apprehend them, poind their gear;  
While they maun stan' wi' aspect humble  
An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!"

The ancient tax-collector was much the same. He had only one friend; Jesus was called the "Friend of publicans."

The publican here referred to was chosen to enforce the lesson *how to approach God*.

I. Observe his face. It expresses a want. "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire." The first assurance of success at the mercy-seat is to "want something."

We were taught in the theological seminary that every well-ordered prayer should consist of four parts, to wit, adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and supplication. But this man in his eagerness forgot all courtesy and leaped over all but the last. In like manner Bartimæus spent no time in the preliminaries of devotion, but cried

again and again, "O thou Son of David, have mercy upon me!" One thing he desired, one thing he must have: "Oh that I might receive my sight!"

We complain of wandering thoughts: we kneel at our devotions and our thoughts go fluttering away from us like the English sparrows that flit and twitter in the trees. The remedy for this is to have a want. Let us pause at the threshold of prayer as Jeanie Deans did at the door of the audience-room, laying her hand upon her heart. Let us, if we would present a petition at the throne of heavenly grace, feel the parchment to make sure it is there.

II. Observe his egotism, "God be merciful to me." Here was no circumlocution. He had been told, doubtless, that rulers and all in authority must be prayed for. He knew that the heathen multitudes lying in darkness and the shadow of death should be prayed for. But he did not think of one beside himself. And he was right. Let the sinner, first of all, set himself right with God. To say the Lord's Prayer, to repeat the Litany, to pray for the world in its weakness and wickedness, if the suppliant himself is still unreconciled with God, is surely an empty form. This publican felt his sin. It rose to vast proportions before his eyes. It seemed like a mountain separating between him and God. There might be other sinners in the world, but he was aware of only one. "God be merciful to me, *the* sinner." He heard the Pharisee saying, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men; I fast twice every week, I give tithes of all I possess." And he in his distress murmured, "Oh, if I were only as good as he! I have done no fasting, I have paid in no tithes; God pity me!"

III. Observe his theology. For there is a whole system

of theology in his brief prayer. The sum and substance of all spiritual truth is in the linking of sin with pardon, in finding a bridge to span the infinite chasm between a condemned culprit and his offended God. This publican had found it. That bridge is Mercy—"God be merciful." In that word is the one answer to the old query, "How can God be just and yet justify the ungodly?" For the prayer is literally, "Be propitiated unto me." In that word, which finds its full significance in the sacrifice upon the Cross, is the full answer to the query, "How shall a man be just with God?"

In 1848 Fergus O'Connor came up to the House of Commons with a Chartist petition to which were affixed 5,700,000 names. All these had one desire and thus unitedly expressed it. But in all the world there is not one living man who does not need mercy. There are sixteen hundred millions of people, and every one of them is a sinner under sentence of spiritual and eternal death. In the heart of every one is a longing to know the way of escape, and the only way of escape is in the mercy of God.

IV. Observe his attitude. He stood afar off, thus showing his reverence. He drooped his eyes, thus manifesting his humility. He beat upon his breast where all his trouble lay, for his was a malady of the heart, and thus he showed his earnestness. This man had not learned his prayer in any philosophic school nor at the feet of any doctrinal teacher, but out of the deep experience of his soul, and every word that he uttered was blistered with a tear.

Our Lord tells of a certain widow who, having suffered wrong, presented herself before the magistrate, entreating him to avenge her. It was his business to avenge her; this is what justices are for. If all who have been wronged



were to present themselves at the door of our justices and magistrates—the widows and those who are worse than widows, the fatherless and those who have been made worse than fatherless by the iniquities of the dramshop and the gambling hell—the days and nights would be vociferous with their appeals. But alas! the magistrates of to-day are much like those of the olden time. This widow could not get a hearing, but she went again and again. He could not rid himself of her. She wearied him. As he entered his home at night he saw her. Then in his dreams he saw her at his door. In the early morning there she was, crying, “Avenge me.” At length he said, “Because she wearieth me I will avenge her.” Shall not the Lord much more—oh blessed *a fortiori*!—avenge his own elect? Shall he not hear those who come with their wrongs, their burdens, their aching hearts, and give him no peace? The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.

V. Observe the sequel: “And this man went down to his house justified.” Justification is an act of God’s free grace whereby he pardoneth all our sins and accepteth us as righteous in his sight. It means that his burden was lifted, his sins forgiven. In the International Exposition of 1862 there were two notable pictures. In one of them was represented a group of persons in the ante-room of a judgment hall. A woman sat wringing her hands in an agony of silent suspense; her little children stood by, sharing in the grief which they could not fathom. The aged grandmother with woe-begone face held a puling infant in her lap. The dog looked up in silent wonder. Through the door opening into the court-room might be seen a man in the prisoner’s box. This was called, “Waiting for the Verdict.” In the other the man stood

with his arm about the woman and her head lay upon his breast. The children were tugging at their mother's skirts, the grandmother was holding up the baby to kiss its father's face, the dog was licking his hand. And this was called, "Acquitted." There is no joy in heaven or on earth like that which the sinner feels when his judgment is over and he is, for Jesus' sake, acquitted before God.

This publican had come up to the temple with a mighty heartache; his sins were heavy upon him. He went down to his house justified, singing now the song of salvation. There were rich men in Jerusalem, but not one who owned such treasure as he; there were king's favorites, but not one who felt so proud and happy as he. A long while he lay awake that night for joy, and in the morning when he arose and looked out towards the east, it was as if the dawn of heaven had burst upon him.

This is a great prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Friend, have you ever offered it? You have said your prayers many a time; you have uttered the formulas, you have read the litanies; but have you ever out of the anguish of a surcharged heart cried out for the mercy of God? When the learned Grotius was dying at Rostock, after a life of theological study and good works, he asked for this parable to be read, and his last word was, "That publican am I."

In one of Joseph Cook's lectures he tells of a wealthy man of affairs who came to an evangelist with a desire to know "whether the gospel were true or not." "Are you sincere?" said the evangelist. "I am," said he. "I will do anything to find out whether the gospel is true or not." "Let us kneel down," said the evangelist, "here and now; and do you say, from your heart, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'" The merchant

did so, earnestly and genuinely, and there came to him a sudden and inexpressible peace. He arose from his knees saying, "This is a singular experience." And seeking his business partner, he related all and said, "Will you not try it?" His partner had been a skeptic, but he consented. They knelt down together and he offered the publican's prayer, and "he too arose smitten across the forehead with a light that falls out of those celestial spaces from which all souls come and into which all men haste."

Get down, my friend, upon thy knees, if thou art an unforgiven sinner, and pray, "God be merciful to me." And as sure as God lives, the answer will come. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

## WASHINGTON'S RELIGION.

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"A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children."

Prov. 13:22.

It is a true saying, "The boy is father of the man." In a copy-book used by George Washington when a boy is this sentence: "Labor to preserve in your bosom that lingering spark of heavenly fire which men call conscience." Out of such fountains flow the streams of an earnest life. This boy was left fatherless at ten years of age; but he had a glorious mother, and he was not ashamed to be a mother's boy. He received through the kindness of a kinsman a midshipman's warrant in the British Navy. His arrangements were all made; the boat that was to carry him across the sea was at anchor in the stream; but as he was setting out he saw tears in his mother's eyes. That was enough for him; he turned back.

It would be curious to speculate what the result would have been had he persisted in his purpose, for on such small events turns the history of the ages.

Long afterwards, when Lafayette brought to Washington's mother a glowing report of his brave deeds, she quietly answered, "I am not surprised; George was always a good boy."

At twenty-one, during the war with the French and Indians, he was chosen to bear a remonstrance to the commander of the enemies' forces. It was a delicate and dan-

gerous errand, involving a journey of six hundred miles over the mountains and across the wilderness. He made it successfully, fording streams, scaling mountains, and braving the hostilities of savage tribes. For this he was promoted to larger responsibilities. A vote of thanks being accorded him in the House of Burgesses, he arose to reply, but his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. "Sit down, Mr. Washington," said the presiding officer, "your modesty alone can equal your valor."

In 1774 he was elected to the first Congress, and was presently made Commander-in-chief of the Continental forces. Then came those eight years of travail-pain out of which was born our constitutional freedom. At the close of the war he gracefully resigned his sword, saying, "The chaplains of the army will render thanks to Almighty God."

In 1787 he attended the Constitutional Convention and was unanimously chosen to preside over it. Soon afterwards he was elected the first President of the United States. On taking the Presidential chair he said, "No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men, more than the people of the United States. Every step by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation seems to have been distinguished by some token of *providential agency*." And further on in the same address, "I shall take my present leave, but not without resorting once more to the benign Parent of the human race in humble supplication that, since he has been pleased to favor the American people with opportunities for deliberating in perfect tranquillity, and a disposition for deciding with unparalleled unanimity on a form of government for the securing of their Union and the advancement of their

happiness, so this divine blessing may be equally conspicuous in the enlarged views, the temperate consultations, and the wise measures on which the success of this Government must depend." At the close of his second term as President he delivered a farewell address, in which he observed, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever can be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle. It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?" At the expiration of his second presidential term he retired to Mt. Vernon, where, as a simple American citizen, he passed the remainder of his days. He died full of years and honors. His last words were, "It is well."

We are familiar with his civic virtues, not so familiar



with his religious character. His success was due less to natural gifts or adventitious circumstances than to his devotion to religious principles. Let those who pay tribute to his character not forget that religion was at the bottom of it.

I. He believed in God. He believed not merely in Universal Law or in a Pervading Force or a Something that maketh for righteousness, but in a personal God, in whose providence he had an abiding faith. In writing of Braddock's defeat he said, "By the all-powerful dispensation of Providence I have been protected beyond all human probability, for I had four bullets through my coat and two horses shot under me, yet I escaped unhurt while death was levelling my companions on every side of me."

Nor did he trust Providence alone in his personal affairs. He believed that a gracious God was protecting the interests of his country. "A man must be worse than an infidel," said he at the close of the Revolutionary War, "who does not see the goodness of God or has not gratitude enough to acknowledge it." On resigning his commission as Commander-in-chief of the Continental forces he said, "I consider it an indispensable duty to close this, my last official act, by commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God."

II. He believed in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In his inmost heart he realized that he was a sinner, and he saw no possibility of pardon save at the cross. He therefore held to the vital doctrine of justification by faith.

Nor was it only with respect to himself that he believed in Christ. He held that our Government was established on the fundamental principles of the gospel. In these days the question is raised whether or no ours

is a Christian nation. He never doubted it. "It is my most earnest prayer," he says in an address to the governors of the several States, "that God would have you and the States over which you preside in his holy protection; that he would incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate the spirit of subordination and obedience to government; and finally, that he would be most graciously pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the divine Author of our blessed religion, without a humble imitation of whose example in these things we can never hope to be a happy nation."

It is a curious fact that while the great majority of our American people are not committed to the Christian religion in any way whatsoever, yet they inadvertently betray their convictions in continuously casting their ballots for Christian men. From George Washington to Grover Cleveland, all our Presidents, with perhaps one exception only, have been in sympathy with the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Of the eight candidates for President and Vice-President at the recent election, every one was a professed believer in the gospel of Christ. The people thus, whatever their open avowal may be, admit that in their judgment the country is safe only in Christian hands.

III. He was a member of the Christian church. It is not an uncommon thing to find men in the councils of the nation who privately admit their belief in the gospel while yet declining, for prudential or other reasons, to make confession of it. No such considerations weighed with Washington. He was a vestryman in the Episcopalian church at Alexandria. His pastor, Rev. Lee

Massy, said, "I never knew so constant an attendant on church as he, and his behavior in the house of God was ever so deeply reverent that it produced the happiest effects." While a churchman, however, he was a broad Christian man. At the time when the army was encamped at Morristown, learning of an approaching Communion in the Presbyterian church, he asked if he might be permitted to participate. The answer was substantially this, "We do not propose to celebrate a Presbyterian Supper nor yet an Episcopalian Supper, but the Supper of the Lord. Come and welcome, if you love Him." He was there. The whole world knows that any narrower interpretation of the Holy Communion than this is a shame and a reproach not merely to Christian fellowship but to sanctified common sense. It is preposterous to build such hedges around the sacred table as that persons shall be excluded who will yet be made welcome at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

IV. He held to the integrity of the Bible as the Word of God. He was wont to refer to it as "the pure and benignant light of revelation." He loved it; he searched it as for hidden treasure. He believed that he found in it the riches of spiritual life.

In those times there was no controversy as to the inerrancy of the Scriptures. There were only two parties in the world. On the one hand there were unbelievers who rejected the Bible, holding that it was a human composition, a splendid landmark of literature, containing some wonderful maxims and profound truths, but still not absolutely true nor worthy to be called, in any honest sense, the veritable Word of God. On the other hand, all of Christ's people received the Scriptures in good faith, as their infallible rule of faith and practice.

They held that whatever numerical or literary errors there might be in its various versions, it was, as it left the hands of the holy men who wrote by inspiration, the absolutely true and inerrant Word of God. As yet scholars had not learned to juggle with words. "Infallible" meant infallible in those days. The two parties, believers and unbelievers, stood squarely divided along the lines of Scriptural truth. It was never dreamed in those days that it would be possible for a man to belong to both parties at once. It was left to be discovered more recently that a man may reject the substantial truth of Scripture and still receive it as infallible; that he may regard it as largely false and still the very Word of God.

On one occasion the nephew of Washington, coming suddenly into his room, found him on his knees with an open Bible before him. If we were accustomed in these times to read our Bible on our knees we would love it more devotedly and find fewer faults in it. The sin of our time is irreverence. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

V. Washington believed in the sanctity of the Sabbath. He required it to be observed by his fellow-officers as well as by the rank and file of his army. And during his chief-magistracy the presidential home was secluded on the Lord's day. In this particular he was so scrupulous that we may well believe he was regarded as a Sabbatic bigot and fanatic.

Times have changed, you say, and men are more liberal now. Ay, times have changed, but the fundamental principles of truth and morality abide for ever. The sanction of Sabbath rest is in these words, "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all

that in them is, and rested the seventh day ; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." The first word of the Sabbath law is, "Remember." One of the things to remember is that God established the Sabbath in his own Sabbatic rest, and the law can obviously never be abrogated until it be proved that God did not rest on the seventh day. And another thing to be remembered in this connection is that no nation ever disregarded the Sabbath law and lived. The paths of history are marked with the ruins of nations that ran thus upon the bosses of the shield of God.

VI. Washington was a praying man. On his leaving home in early boyhood his mother said, "My son, never neglect the duty of secret prayer." Nor did he. It was his custom to rise at 4 A. M. for devotions. It is known to every one how a certain Quaker while walking along a creek near Valley Forge, hearing a voice from a dense thicket, pushed his way through and found Washington upon his knees. His face was uplifted and suffused with tears. At this time the Continental cause was at the last extremity. The troops were barefoot and hungry, the treasury depleted, and all hearts sick with hope deferred. The Commander-in-chief was making a desperate plea to God for the triumph of right and freedom. A man of prayer is ever a man of power. The great leaders in the historic struggles for human rights have been praying men, such as Cromwell, the Prince of Orange, and Gustavus Adolphus, who entered battle with a *Pater Noster* on his lips.

VII. The things which Washington believed he also exemplified in his daily life. The fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, were witnessed in his walk and conversation. The



words which the lad had written in the copy-book, "Labor to preserve in your bosom that lingering spark of heavenly fire which men call conscience," were as his guiding star. His life was marked by an unchallenged probity. It is said that the flour that was manufactured at Mt. Vernon bearing the Washington mark was passed without the customary inspection in West Indian ports. The name of Washington was voucher for the genuineness of whatever bore it. He had learned the Master's word, Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify God.

It may be profitable in closing this monograph on the character of the Father of his Country, to call attention to a startling parallel. The cause of freedom was fought out almost contemporaneously in America and France. When the hour struck in our country the man was forthcoming—Washington, who thoroughly believed in God. When the hour struck in France the man also was forthcoming—Napoleon, who followed his star of destiny. While our people were nerving themselves in prayer and consecration for the approaching struggle, the mobs were gathering in the streets of Paris; they were writing "Liberty, fraternity, equality" across the dead walls and on the doors of Notre Dame. The Continental Congress was opened with prayer, while in the Corps Legislatif a resolution was offered and passed, "There is no God." The wives and children of the colonies, while their husbands and fathers were enduring the rigors of war, bore hunger and privation with prayerful patience. The women of France marched out to Versailles and interrupted the National Assembly there, crying, "This is no question of politics; this is a question of bread." While the fabric of constitutional freedom was rising on this side of the sea,



the sharp blade of the guillotine on the other was decapitating the bravest and noblest of France. And when our nation was rejoicing in the ultimate success of its glorious struggle for human rights and giving praises to God, the disappointed people of France were in unspeakable despair because their hopes were extinguished and their ill-founded temple of freedom had gone down in fire and blood. So true is it that the nation that will not serve God shall perish. Of men and nations alike Jehovah hath said, "If ye seek me I will be found of you; if ye forsake me I will cast you off."

A last word. In commemorating the virtues of Washington do we reflect that we pay involuntary homage to his religion? If he was right, then those who revere him and yet reject his Christian principles are surely wrong. His life was moulded by his faith. So that unless our reverence for him is merely sentimental, we pay tribute, whether by intention or otherwise, to the God in whom he believed, the Saviour in whom he trusted, the Bible in which he had implicit confidence, the church whose interests he espoused, the Sabbath which he scrupulously observed, the habit of prayer which he regarded as the bond of union between heaven and earth, and all those Christian graces which, making up a perfect character, find their only realization in the divine Son of Man. Let us hear then the conclusion of the whole matter:—Can we say it?—His God shall be our God for ever and ever!

## THE BIBLE BEING DISPOSED OF, WHAT THEN ?

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"And it came to pass when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth." JER. 36:23.

THE Ten Commandments, written on two tables of stone, which Moses received in the flaming mountain, were kept in the Ark of the Covenant. They formed the nucleus of the Canon of Scripture. As time passed, the five books of Moses were added, then the Prophets and the Hagiographa, or sacred poems. This body of inspired writings was known as the Book of the Law.

The Book of the Law was not merely a religious symbol, it was the Constitution of the Jewish Theocracy. There should have been, therefore, a double interest in preserving it. At times, however, it was almost ignored. In the reign of the wicked kings, when altars were raised everywhere to Baal and Astarte, the inspired scroll was lost sight of. On one occasion, as certain of the attendants of the temple were rummaging through a lumber-room, they came upon a dust-covered scroll. They opened it and were amazed by what they saw. It was the forgotten Book of the Law. Its discovery was reported to the king, Josiah. A new impulse was thereby given to his half-formed purpose of reforming the nation. The high places were thrown down, the idols shattered, the Passover was

restored. And so long as Josiah reigned, worship was rendered to the true God.

The reformation was but temporary, however; it was not the break of a better day, but the fitful glow of northern lights. At Josiah's death the darkness deepened, the nation went hastening to its ruin. From the south came the threatenings of Egypt; in the east the heavy footfall of the Assyrian host began to be heard; meanwhile the nation was torn asunder by two rival parties. The party of the princes was substantially pagan, the party of the priests nominally true to Jehovah, but in fact given over to outward ceremonial and superstition of the basest sort. Under the temple were chambers of imagery, from its eastern porch worship was paid to the rising sun. When Jehoiakim came to the throne his empire was a mere dependency, and he a vassal of Egypt.

While these things were transpiring the voice of the prophet Jeremiah was heard in earnest admonition. He uttered faithful warnings in the temple courts and at the palace doors; he called upon ruler and people to heed the Book of the Law. He was hated and cursed for his pains. On the edge of Hinnom he held aloft an earthenware vessel, dashed it upon the rocks below, crying, "So shall the Great Potter shiver Jerusalem to pieces!" He was seized and cast into prison.

In prison he had one faithful friend, the scribe Baruch, to whom were committed the prophecies of those last fateful years. A new canonical book was thus added to the Book of the Law. It was determined that this should be publicly read. On a December day, at the gate of the temple, the writings were recited by Baruch in the presence of the multitude. He was summoned to appear at the court to read this Book of the Law. It struck terror to the hearts of his

hearers. They told the king. "Bring the scroll," said he. It was brought by Jehudi, one of his courtiers, who began to read it. As he proceeded the king was more and more offended by the frank warnings of the book. "I like not that," he said; "cut it out." And again, "I like not that; cut it out." And so, until Jehudi's penknife had cruelly mutilated the parchment. At length, losing all patience with the faithful book, the king cried, "Cast it into the fire!" A brazier was burning near by; the parchment was thrown in and burned up. Was Jehoiakim relieved? No doubt. The faithful book was gone, but alas, its woes remained and the doom of the nation hastened on!

We have that Book of the Law. It is our infallible rule of faith and practice. But the penknife of destructive criticism is at work upon it. A considerable portion of every book which has passed under review is being thrown out because it does not comport with the prejudgments of the so-called Biblical experts. And so far as the radical scholars of Germany and Oxford are concerned, the Scriptures are substantially thrown into the fire. It is not my purpose, however, to enter into the current controversy now. There is a party to this controversy which has not been recognized thus far. A party of outsiders there is who stand rubbing their hands and crying, Aha! aha! while the Book of the Law is being mutilated and burned up.

Is it not a curious thing that all the unbelievers of every sort should be on one side in this controversy? There is not an infidel circle in the world which does not rejoice at the suggestion that the Bible is not true. The work of destructive criticism commends itself to all the "lewd fellows of the baser sort." All dram-sellers and

gamblers and disreputables of all kinds whatsoever are glad to be assured that inroads are being made upon the trustworthiness of Holy Writ. Why should the ungodly hate the Bible? Why should they make merry at the thought of having it put away? Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. They are offended by the doctrines and put to an open shame by the moral precepts of this Book of the Law.

It will be worth while to inquire, however, wherein the ungodly would be bettered if the Bible were burned up. Let us suppose that all the present assaults upon the veracity of the Scriptures are to be successful. What then? Were the Bible proved to be quite unworthy of confidence, were it shown to be dotted everywhere with error as thick as a leper with his loathsome scales, what advantage would it be to godless men?

I. *God would still remain.* The Bible does not make God; it does not even demonstrate the being of God. It assumes him. Its opening words are, "In the beginning God created."

It takes God for granted because the world intuitively believes in him. The simplest argument in all the world is that which phrases itself thus: Design supposes a designer. Were I to say that John Milton made "Paradise Lost" by jumbling letters in a bag and tossing them forth, all reasonable men would laugh at me; but this would be no more preposterous than is the allegation that our universe is a fortuitous concourse of atoms. All men know that back of law is the Lawgiver, back of order the Arranger, back of design an Infinite Contriver.

But while the world would retain its belief in God, it would, in the absence of the Scriptures, know nothing of his Providence or of his Fatherhood. It could not dis-

cern his "milder face." Men would still, however, be Theists, sensible of an all-pervading Power and ever uttering the sentiment which fills the pagan breast, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God."

II. *The sense of sin would remain.* The Bible is not responsible for the sense of sin. It did not make man, it did not turn him aside from the path of virtue; it simply takes him as it finds him.

If there were no Bible, our consciences would still speak to us. When Prof. Webster was lying in prison awaiting his doom he made formal complaint that he was affronted by his keepers, who shouted at him, "Oh, you bloody man!" and by his fellow-prisoners, who pounded on the walls of his cell, shouting, "Oh, you bloody man!" A watch was set, but no voice was heard; it was his guilty conscience that was crying out against him. It is the voice of conscience that drives the pagan nations to their knees and kindles the fires beneath their altars. It needs no heavenly voice to convince us that we have sinned and that sin carries with it a death-sentence. It is not the Bible that gives us Ixion on the wheel, or Sisyphus vainly rolling the stone up the mountain-side, or Tantalus up to his lips in the ever-receding waters. No, in any case conscience would remain; but in the absence of revelation we should know no remedy for its sting. The only balm in Gilead is the blood of Jesus. It alone has power to deliver from sin.

A notable passage in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians tells us that we are all "concluded under sin." The new version reads, "shut up under sin." But in either case the underlying thought is that of imprisonment. There is no difference; we are all behind the dungeon bars. There are other religions which come and sing sweetly



under the windows; there are other philosophies which set forth charming ethical truths; but there is only one gospel which draws the bolts and springs back the mighty doors and bids us come out and breathe the air of heaven and dwell in the glorious liberty of the children of God.

III. *Were the Bible destroyed, our sense of duty would still remain.* The word "duty" means something due or owed. This sense of due-ness or obligation which is expressed in the great word "ought" is native to the human soul.

The moral law is set forth in the Scriptures in the Decalogue and the Sermon on the Mount. The Decalogue, however, was written in the human constitution long before it found expression in Scripture. It is interwoven with the nerves and sinews of the race. The Sermon on the Mount is simply a broad and glorious exposition of the Decalogue. There is nothing new or original here. We are reminded that the Golden Rule itself did not originate with Christ. The ethical system of the Bible is merely an authoritative statement of certain laws which are written in the soul of man. God here places his *imprimatur* on those otherwise anonymous precepts which the whole world recognizes as right. So, were the Bible to vanish, the moral distinctions would remain and a man would know his duty while, alas, ever sensible of not doing it.

The peace of Herod Antipas was greatly troubled by John the Baptist, who kept insisting that he should put away Mariamne. "It is not lawful for thee to have her," said the Prophet of the Wilderness; "Put her away, attend to the serious tasks of thy kingdom, meet the great obligations of thy royal life!" To drown this voice of disapproval he doomed the prophet to the black fortress and at length slew him. The head of John the Baptist was

brought in on a charger. He looked on the stern features and doubtless said within himself, "I shall hear no more of thy fierce reproaches." But the dim eyes of the weird prophet looked at him from every nook and cranny and pierced his soul in the watches of the night. And when a new prophet arose and went about preaching righteousness, Herod cried, "It is John the Baptist risen from the dead!" So let this Bible, our divine monitor of duty, be destroyed and still its voice will find us.

The one thing in this connection which the world would most grievously miss would be the portrait of the great Right-Doer. Man would still struggle in the ranks of noble effort, but the Captain would be dead. In all the world there would be then no living exemplification of duty, no perfect Man, no Christ to stand on the heights above, inspiring, beckoning, calling, "Follow Me." And without Christ the thought of perfection would be mere fancy; he is the only *dikaïos*. We should philosophize about virtue and manhood and character, but never see an exemplification of it. Thus it is written, "The whole world groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God." This longing is, without Christ, unsatisfied. God still looketh down from heaven to see, and behold! there is none that doeth righteousness, no, not one.

IV. *The Bible gone, death would still remain; death—and judgment following after.* The Bible is not responsible for death.

It needs no revelation from on high to tell us that, as Abd-el-Kader says, "the black camel kneels at our gate." That admonition is written on the grave-stones that line the journey of our life.

“The air is full of farewells to the dying  
And mournings for the dead.”

But without the Scriptures we should have no hope of triumph over death. There would be no story of the great triumph which was wrought for us in Joseph's garden. At twilight the bearers brought the lifeless body of Jesus and with tears and lamentations laid it away in the new-made sepulchre. A stone was rolled before it, the seal of the Roman Empire was placed upon it, and a guard was stationed. And then the King of Terrors came and walked up and down before the grave. “I have conquered the King of Life,” he murmured. “I have him here and I will hold him.” The night wore on, and still the grim patrol walked to and fro. “I have conquered all,” he said. “Adam—I slew him. Abraham, called the Friend of God—I slew him. Noah, whom the flood spared—I slew him. Moses went up into a mountain alone, and I met and slew him there. Methusehlah—they thought I had forgotten him; but though he lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years, yet must his biographers add, ‘He died.’ I slew them all, and behold, the Prince of Life lies yonder. I have Him and will keep him!” But in the darkness the blood of the slain was quickened, the flesh grew warm; the cerements stirred; the wounded hand was lifted, loosed the napkin from about the pale face and laid it away, was lifted again as though a sceptre were within it, and thereat the stone rolled from the grave's mouth. The King of Terrors fled like a frightened spectre at daybreak, and the King of Life came forth. “Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept.” So is come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory! O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave,

where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

V. *The dream of immortality would still remain.* This is quite independent of Scripture. The Greeks put an obolus upon the tongue of the dead to pay their ferryage across the Styx because there might be a happy land beyond. The Indian chief was buried with his bows and arrows at his side, because, if there should by chance be a happy hunting-ground, he would need them there. Thus immortality has always been a fond dream—a dream only. When Cicero lighted the lamp in the grave of his daughter it was with the thought that possibly her life, though extinguished for a time, might be rekindled. When Socrates put the cup of hemlock to his lips, he said, "I go; whether to perish or to live again I know not." The old fable of the Phoenix expressed the fondest of pagan hopes.

No, no, we should not lose the dream but we should lose the certainty, for in the gospel life and immortality are brought to light. The twilight vanishes, the dream becomes a splendid reality. Just yonder through the mists of the river we behold the better country, even an heavenly,

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,  
All drest in living green."

Just yonder where the clouds had obscured the mountains we observe the Holy City, New Jerusalem. "Its twelve gates were twelve pearls, every several gate was one pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass." It is a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Still yonder, through the veil rent in the midst, we behold our Father's

house, "Home, sweet Home." And the saints perfected are drawing near and at the gateway are clasping hands with loved ones who were "lost a while." Oh glorious day of knitting severed friendships up!

The dream of immortality would linger with us, but the "better country," the "city that hath foundations," the "Father's house" would disappear within the dimness of the morning mist.

Thus all the bald and barren facts which we hold as spiritual intuitions would still abide were the Scriptures burned up—God, sin, duty, death, immortality—but all these truths would lose their warmth and helpfulness, like stars glowing in the distance, but cold and unhelpful for ever. Let those who have thoughtlessly stood by the brazier, sympathizing with the enemies of Holy Writ, pause and reflect upon the loss which even they would sustain were the folds of the great curtain, which God has lifted, to close again upon us.

The sun is a great way off; it is so far distant as to be of little particular interest to most of us, a round ball far yonder in space, some millions of miles, looking not larger than a brazen shield or a dinner-plate; nor is it a perfect orb. The maculæ can be seen upon it with an unaided eye. And it resists an intrusive gaze. What care we then for the sun? But quench it—lo, the light is gone out of the diamond, the sparkle from the brook, and beauty from the whole earth; the grass has withered, the birds have ceased their singing, the planets themselves have faded out. Our world would still be here or somewhere, rolling round an eccentric orb in silence, utter darkness, and eternal solitude, an uninhabited and voice-ruin.

The Bible is our noonday sun. Its glories are far

away from the multitude who will not receive it. There are mysteries, vast and incomprehensible here; but burn the book, or what is the same, let the world lose its confidence in it, and all that makes life worth living goes from us. Our civil and ecclesiastical freedom, the sanctions of home and social life, hope, triumphant faith—all are gone. A sunless world is no more desolate than a Bibleless world would be.

But the Bible is in no danger; it has come to stay; it will glorify life and illuminate the valley of death until the last penitent sinner has gone through heaven's gate. The burning of the Scriptures is an old story. All along the path of history are bonfires of the Book, and still it lives. Voltaire said that he would pass through the forest of the Scriptures and girdle all its trees so that in a hundred years Christianity would be only a vanishing memory. The hundred years have expired; Voltaire is gone, and "none so poor to do him reverence," but Christianity is still here and the trees of the Lord are full of sap. The brazier of Jehoiakim is a golden altar, the fumes of which, like frankincense, have gone through all the earth. The wrath of hostile criticism in seeking to destroy the life of the Scriptures has but crushed its spices, sending forth their fragrance to the skies. The truth is indestructible. All flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of the field that withereth. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the Word of our God shall stand for ever.



## THE LOST NAME.

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“And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am Jehovah; and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am Jehovah, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgments: and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for a heritage: I am Jehovah.”  
EXOD. 6:2-8. (New Version.)

It is an interesting fact that up to the time here referred to God was practically nameless. The titles which were applied to him had reference to his essential nature and attributes. (1.) *El*, which meant power, or in the plural form, *Elohim*, powers, was a general term corresponding to the idea which some learned people now entertain of Deity when they speak of him as Law, Force, All-pervading Energy, and the like. (2.) *Adonai*, which meant Lord or Master, had reference to the divine mastery and to that alone. Of such a God David

Strauss said, "In the enormous machine of the universe, amid the incessant hiss and whirr of its jagged iron wheels and the deafening crash of its stamps and hammers, I find myself a helpless and defenceless man, not sure for a moment that the wheels may not seize and rend me or the hammers crush me into powder." (3.) *Jehovah*. A term used less frequently than the others, and having respect to the divine essence. It was, in no sense, as yet, a name for God.

The time had come when a name must be given him. The family of Abraham, chosen to keep the oracles and to transmit the forms of true worship to coming ages, had multiplied into a vast horde of people who were now bond-slaves in Egypt. God purposed that they should be delivered out of bondage and developed into a nation which should establish truth and righteousness on the earth. To this end he spake out of the burning bush to Moses: "I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people out of Egypt." It was natural for Moses to ask for credentials. "When I come unto the children of Israel," said he, "and they shall ask, What is the name of the God that hath sent you? what shall I say?" And God said, "I AM THAT I AM; thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." "This is my name for ever and this is my memorial unto all generations." The name here appropriated by him, I AM THAT I AM, is identical with Jehovah. It is spoken of as a new name. "I appeared unto thy fathers by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them." The name Jehovah had been known, but only now was adopted as the distinctive name of the true God. So the rainbow had always been in the heavens, but at

the subsidence of the flood it was made the token of a divine covenant, as the Lord said, 'I do set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be for a token of the covenant between me and thee.' A new and blessed significance was put upon it.

This mysterious name was used with the utmost reverence. As time passed a superstitious value was attached to it, insomuch that it became a word to juggle with. At length it was wholly ruled out of common use. To utter it became a sin. It was called the separated name, the incommunicable name. The High Priest alone was now permitted to pronounce it once a year on the great Day of Atonement when he entered the Holiest of All. When written, the four consonants were alone used, whence it was called the *tetragrammaton*. This undue reverence found its excuse in a misinterpretation of Leviticus 24:16, "He that blasphemeth the name of Jehovah shall surely be put to death." At length the pronunciation of the name was wholly lost. Tradition says that the secret perished with Simeon the Just. At this moment there is no living man who can declare with authority how the word should be spoken. The judgment of scholars is divided as to whether it should be *Yahveh*, *Yehveh*, *Yahvoh*, or *Jehovah*. The modern Jews substitute the name Adonai for it.

What is the meaning of this lost name of God?

I. Its fundamental thought is that of *Life*. It was derived from the verb *to be*. It tells us that God is; i. e., that he is not a mere dream or a fancy, but a veritable fact. God lives; he is not as Pantheism paints him, an all-pervading essence, but a self-conscious personality. God is self-existent; not like the pagan gods who were derived from trees or mountains or foam of the sea.

"He sits on no precarious throne,  
Nor borrows leave to be."

God is the source and fountain of life. All the vitality of the universe, physical as well as spiritual, is derived from him. A scientist may wire and clamp together the bones of a mastodon, but all the scientists of the world cannot breathe into that form the breath of life. It is an axiom of science that "life proceeds from life and from nothing else." If man could create a living germ, a bacillus, an animalcule, we might perhaps dispense with God. But as matters now stand, all living things must derive their being from the living God.

II. The name suggests the divine attribute of *Eternity*. God liveth for ever. He is the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity. The temple of King Solomon was "exceeding magnificent," with gold of Sheba, cedars of Lebanon, and ivory from Ethiopia; but what of the great temple wherein God dwelleth? Infinitude is its dome; the immeasurable æons are the buttresses of its walls.

In distinction from the endless existence of man, His life is *sempiternal*, i. e., he never began to be and he will never cease to be—he is without beginning or end of days.

Let the mind wander back along the history of the nations, past the beginning of human life, through the dense steaming forests of the carboniferous era, past chaos, past the primal nebulae and the primordial germ, and in the infinite silence and solitude it confronts God.

The oldest scrap of literature in existence is probably the ninetieth Psalm. It was written by Moses at the end of his eventful life. He stood amid the summits of the everlasting mountains and looked backward over the desert pilgrimage. The way was lined on every side

with graves; the venerable heads of the tribes of Israel had one by one paid the debt of nature. The thought of the divine eternity came over him with irresistible force and he sang,

“Jehovah, thou hast been our dwelling-place  
In all generations.  
Before the mountains were brought forth,  
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,  
Even from everlasting to everlasting,  
Thou art God.”

III. In this name there is reference to the divine *immutability*, as if God said, I am that I was and will be. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

There is, however, a vast difference between immutability and immobility. He is not unchangeable in any such sense as that he cannot be moved. The Egyptians carved upon the over-towering cliffs an image of Ammon-Ra, a blank-faced, immovable, stony-hearted god. The Pharaohs bowed before it. Processions of slaves prostrated themselves and cried, Oh hear and deliver us! The mothers of old Egypt brought their burdened hearts and said their prayers here. But there was no voice nor answer nor any that regarded. We too call our God the Rock of Ages, but he is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God. Any philosophy of the decrees which shuts out the possibility of the adjustment of the divine mercy to human appeal must be false. Eyes are not eyes if they cannot look down in compassion upon the suppliant; a heart is not a heart unless it can throb with love; and hands are not hands unless they can be stretched forth to help.

There is one “difficulty” in the Scriptures for which we may justly give thanks; it is that which arises from

the statement that "God repenteth." Not once, but over and over again, he is said to repent. He looked down upon the children of Israel while they danced in their mad orgies around the golden calf and was moved with anger; but Moses kneeled before him crying, "Oh this people have sinned a great sin, yet now, if thou wilt forgive them—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book." And it is written, The Lord repented of the evil which he had thought to do unto his people. Thus it appears that whatever the divine immutability may be, it is not immobility; it does not prevent his having mercy upon the children of men.

He is immutable, however, in his nature and character. The divine essence can be never more nor less. He is the same in power as when he called out of nothing the things that are; the same in wisdom as when in the beginning, he adjusted all things to their uses; the same in justice as when he said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" the same in mercy as when he sent his only-begotten and well-beloved Son to bear the shame and suffering of the children of men; the same in truth as when he said that he that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life.

God is the Father of Lights. The sun rises and sets, the moon has its phases, the stars are eclipsed and all the bodies of the heavens cast a shadow by their turning. With God, however, there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

IV. The name, declares, also, the progressive manifestation of God in history. It might be rendered, and is indeed so rendered by some Hebrew scholars, "I am what I shall show myself to be," or "I will show what I am."

God is a constant factor in history. But theology is



progressive; we know more of God to-day than we did yesterday. He is the Spirit in the wheels of human affairs, and he makes himself known more and more, like the sun coming from behind a cloud.

In the Old Economy he was seen in dim outlines, in the Shechinah, in theophanies, in dreams and visions of the night. There were voices out of the darkness; or a man might hide in the cleft of the rock and hear the rustling of God's garment as he passed by.

Then came the period of the Incarnation, a brief span of thirty years, when God walked among men. It was not best, however, that he should so abide. "It is expedient," he said, "that I go away." The best conception of Deity was not in knowing even Jesus after the flesh.

So came the dispensation of the Spirit in which we live. The Spirit of the Infinite One is abroad everywhere and working among men. History is but the record of his consummate plan for the restitution of all things. He is building up on earth the kingdom of truth and righteousness. He is continually showing himself in the operations of his providence and grace. It is our grave misfortune if we cannot see or hear him. Berkeley said, "I am but a fly on the wheel of the King's chariot." A human life is at the best but one revolution of that wheel. The greatest of mortal men is but an ephemera. Napoleon buzzed and stung for a brief season; the wheel rolled around, and yonder he lies in his porphyry coffin under the dome of the Invalides, crushed into dust; but the chariot rolls on. Oh that our eyes might be opened to see, our ears unstopped to hear, how God advances through the years!

V. Jehovah was the name by which God was pleased

to make himself known as distinctively the God of Israel. It was the name affixed to his covenant; it was the name by which he certified to his truth, "As I live, saith the Lord." He has sworn by himself because there was no greater.

In the Old Testament we note the presence of a strange figure, known as the Angel of the Covenant. It was he who promised after the eating of the forbidden fruit that the fruit of woman should bruise the serpent's head. It was he who encouraged Abraham on his long journey by the banks of the Euphrates to the land of promise, pointing to the stars of heaven and saying, "So shall thy seed be." He appeared to Isaiah in the guise of the Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, lifting his pierced hands and promising redemption to penitent souls. He came to the prophets with assurances that the night of Egyptian darkness was to be succeeded by a glorious dawn. But for a while there was an end of dreams and visions. The Angel of the Covenant came no more. The lights in the sanctuary were extinguished, the Old Testament was closed, and that awful night of four hundred years which intervened between the Old and the New Economy closed in.

The Daybreak was announced by the song of the angels on the Judæan hillsides, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will to men!" The Christ-child lay in the manger. Behold the Messenger of the Covenant was come back to dwell among men. This was his claim. To the woman of Samaria, who expressed her hope of the promised Messiah, he said, "I that speak to you am He." In the porch of the temple, to the scribes and Pharisees who boasted of their descent from Abraham, he said, "Before Abraham was I am." Was there

a suggestion in those words of the ancient name I AM? His assertion was regarded as blasphemy, for they took up stones to stone him. On another occasion the people said, "Tell us plainly, art thou the Christ or not?" And he answered, "I have told you and ye believed not; the works that I do bear witness of me. I and my Father are one." At the end of his ministry, when Pilate asked him, "Art thou a King?"—better, "Art thou the King?" i. e., the promised one—he answered, "Thou sayest it." The superscription of the cross was Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. This Jesus is the mysterious figure whom we found walking through the history of Israel in the olden time.

Let us hear then the conclusion of the whole matter. Jehovah is our God. Our commission, like that of Moses, is from him: "I AM hath sent you."

It is not a fortuitous circumstance that the old name by which God wished himself to be known among his chosen people is lost and forgotten. A new name has taken its place, the name that was given to the Christ-child: "And thou shalt call his name Jesus, because he shall save his people from their sins." The Angel of the Covenant, the long-looked-for Messiah, the King who was to restore the kingdom to Israel, Jehovah, and Jesus are all one. To us, the name of Jesus is significant of everything dear and precious to our spiritual life.

An old negro who had long desired to read came to his young mistress with the Bible in his hand and his finger on the word "God." "Is this his name, G-o-d? Does that spell God? O bless the Lord, my old eyes have read it!" How precious to us, beloved, should be the name of Jesus, which is above every other that is named in heaven or on earth, the only name whereby

any man can be saved. Let us speak it lovingly, let us speak it triumphantly.

"Jesus, I love thy charming name,  
'Tis music to mine ear;  
Fain would I sound it out so loud  
That earth and heaven should hear.

"I'll speak the honors of thy name  
With my last laboring breath;  
Then, speechless, clasp thee in mine arms,  
The antidote of death!"

## THE OLD LANDMARKS.

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“Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set.”  
Prov. 22:28.

THE wisdom of the Mosaic code is nowhere more manifest than in its provisions touching the tenure of land. At the time of the Conquest an equitable distribution was made of about fifteen millions of acres. This, allowing for six hundred thousand heads of families, gave something more than twenty acres to each, and still left above two millions of acres for the public domain. The land thus apportioned was to be held for ever. Every man in Israel was a landholder, and what was more he must remain so. If through improvidence or misfortune he lost his possession it was expressly provided that it might be redeemed by a kinsman, called *goël*, or at the worst, in default of such redemption, the title reverted to its original proprietor in the fiftieth year—the year of Jubilee.

We need not be disciples of Henry George to perceive the benefits of such an arrangement. It was impossible for a shiftless father to pauperize his posterity. A few rich owners could not monopolize the land. The lines could not be drawn between plebeian and patrician. Thus the dangers which befell the early republics of Greece and Italy were averted by the Jewish agrarian laws.

It was customary to mark the boundaries of estates by corner-stones. To remove these landmarks, if an envious neighbor were so disposed, was an easy matter. A repetition of this offence would, in course of time,

involve a complete disarrangement of proprietary rights ; it was therefore prohibited under a severe penalty. King Ahab lost his crown for depriving a poor subject of his patrimony in land. A violation of the sanctity of the landmarks was in the nature of *lèse majesté* ; it touched the foundation of the commonwealth, for these landmarks were the guarantees of individual freedom and were necessary to the security of domestic life.

It is not with land tenure, however, that we have now to do, but with the spiritual inheritance handed down by our fathers as a rich bequest of truth and virtue. This is of more value than boundless acres ; its title-deed is sealed with the image and superscription of the King of kings. It therefore behooves us to look well to its preservation. An attempt to remove the landmarks of this inheritance is noted as one of the dangerous tendencies of modern thought.

I. One of the landmarks by which this spiritual inheritance is secured to us is our *belief in the supernatural*.

The vandal hand reached forth to remove this boundary is *Agnosticism*, the most popular form of current unbelief.

The secret of spiritual wisdom is to be able to measure aright the relative value of things visible and invisible. The things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal. We look towards the heavens and are impressed by what our eyes behold ; but the invisible law by which those multitudinous orbs are kept in their orbits with no perceptible perturbation for countless ages, is more wonderful than aught our eyes can see. We open the pages of history and mark the procession of kings and thrones and dynasties, amid noise and dust arising, triumphing, succeeding one



another, pausing as they pass long enough to write their epitaphs upon the overtowering cliffs, and vanishing like the baseless fabric of a dream. Far more imposing than all these visible powers is the philosophy of history; the spirit in the wheels is a thousand-fold more real and persistent than anything which hands can handle or eyes perceive. So with personal influence: men live, struggle, attain greatness; but at the last here lies Cæsar at the foot of Pompey's statue so helpless that you may thrust him aside with your foot. But you cannot thrust aside the impalpable, imponderable, intangible thing that lingers after him. Influence never dies.

The truth thus outlined holds with ten-fold emphasis in the province of spiritual things. We are environed by a world infinitely greater than our physical horizons. God and eternity are round about us. Now and then the nearness of awful verities comes to us as to weary Balboa and his troops came the sudden glimpse of the sea. A hand is reached down into our narrow lives as real as the hand that wrote upon the palace wall of Belshazzar. In the midst of our sorrows we see the ladder of light stretching from our stony bed to the invisible throne of God; or in our best moments we are caught up like Paul into a third heaven of visions, where we behold things which it is not lawful to utter. And notwithstanding our sordid lives, we believe in the unseen sublimities. The visible and tangible things upon which we set our hearts are passing away, but God and glory and our heavenly hope are sublimely real.

All this, however, is denied by the Agnostic. "Of your heaven," he says, "I know nothing. There may be a God and heaven and endless life, but I have never seen them. There are some things, however, that I

know. My bread-and-butter life is a tangible fact, the cries of the suffering are ringing in my ears; the duty which should engage my attention is to live an honest, earnest life, to do my best here and now, to make a livelihood, deal fairly and honestly with my fellow-men, relieve poverty and suffering, and make the world brighter and better. I know this world and propose to make the best of it: there may be another world, but I know nothing about it."

With this specious form of unbelief the philosophy of Jesus is at odds. It says this present life is real and earnest, most of all because it is the preparation for an endless one. It bids me live as a man should who is born in the divine likeness. Live for eternity. Be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. In all things be mindful of the hereafter. Seek first the kingdom of God.

II. A second of our spiritual landmarks is *Revelation*. By this we mean the Holy Scriptures. All other views of the unseen are mere fragmentary glimpses: for whatever communication there may have been in ancient times between this world and heaven through dreams and visions and angels' visits, the medium of intercourse to-day is the written Word. From the Bible we receive divine direction as to our belief and the conduct of our daily life.

The enemy of Scripture to-day is *Rationalism*, by which is meant any form of exalting the reason above a "Thus saith the Lord." We are told that the loss of Scripture or its impairment as an intrinsic oracle would be of little relative moment, since we might fall back on two coördinate sources of authority, to wit, the Church and the Reason.

In this present controversy as to the trustworthiness of Scripture we have already sustained a twofold loss:

*First*, a loss of reverence. A theory of criticism which requires of us an absolute surrender of all prejudgments as to the sanctity of Holy Writ, to the end that we may pass a fair judgment upon its merits, could not result otherwise. It is not true that the Bible must, in fair criticism, be approached as we approach any other book. We cannot forget its divineness. "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

*Secondly*, a loss of faith has been sustained. A theory of criticism which requires the exclusive use of the inductive process, the argument from tangible facts to conclusions, rules out the exercise of faith. Faith is the evidence of things not seen. The eternal verities lie within the province of the unseen. Faith takes God at his word. Rationalism in any form whatsoever must come in its last reduction to the position of Theodore Parker, who said, "I refuse to accept these things upon the authority of any such person as God."

We are oftentimes reminded nowadays that Christianity is not the religion of a book, but of a personal Christ. The truth is, however, that it is the religion of Christ and of the Book as well.

The landlords of old England held their titles under the seal of William the Conqueror. All those titles were recorded in what is historically known as the Domesday Book. There was not in all England a single proprietor who did not feel that his property was a royal gift; and yet there was not one who, when his title was questioned, failed to fortify it by reference to the Domesday Book. This Bible is our ultimate authority as to truth and conduct, nor can any man be loyal to Christ without being also loyal to that Word whereto Christ has affixed his seal.

III. The third of the landmarks is *belief in Christ*; and is there indeed danger at this point? Ay, there is!

In the later writings of John the Evangelist there walks a dim figure which he calls Antichrist. It has greatly bewildered exegetes to discover its meaning. The fact is, however, that John himself declares Antichrist to be any form of philosophy whatsoever which denies the divine personality and authority of the only-begotten Son of God. It was his prediction that this Antichrist should come and exhibit his malignant powers with special vigor in the last days. We observe that influence in many forms of humanitarianism which are prevalent to-day. The arrogation of profound regard for Jesus and insistence that all true theology shall be Christo-centric, and sentimental claims of affection towards him, are not sufficient evidence of real Christianity as long as there is a substantial denial of what John calls the "doctrine of Christ."

It is a true saying that straws show which way the wind is blowing. Twenty-five years ago the rationalistic wing of the Reformed Church of Germany was craftily engaged in controverting the authenticity of Christ's miracles and the inerrancy of Scripture. To-day the same school, led by Harnack, is demanding the elimination from the Apostles' Creed of everything that teaches the divineness of Christ. Ten years ago some theologians, having disposed of the integrity of the Scriptures, were eloquently discoursing of the "larger hope." To-day they send forth their manifesto for a "re-statement of the doctrine of Christ." In these tokens of deviation among the professed followers of Christ we discover a dangerous drift.

As to the final outcome, it is quite beyond peradventure that truth and righteousness as represented in the Christian religion will triumph over all the earth. But it

is well to be informed as to current modes of unbelief, and to be on our guard against them. In that wonderful Epistle which the aged John wrote to the "elect lady" he cautions her not to extend the hospitality of her home to such as travelled at that time disseminating false views respecting the Saviour: "Receive not such an one into thy house," he said; "neither bid him God-speed."

IV. The fourth of the landmarks is *tradition*, and here I am aware we impinge upon the popular prejudice, for there is a clamor in these times against all traditionalism.

What is tradition? A handing down. Is a thing the worse for having been handed down? Yet we are in constant danger of running with the multitude who clamor against the thing that bears the seal of antiquity. The hand of "*Progress*" is laid upon this landmark of truth. When Madame Roland was being led away to her death, during the Reign of Terror, she looked toward an image of Freedom in the *Place de la Revolution*, saying, "O Liberty, what dreadful things are done in thy name!" In like manner we exclaim, O Progress, what dreadful things are being done in thy name to-day! Freedom of thought is a sacred thing: but "Free Thought" has come to be a hissing and a by-word. And Progress in theological circles has come to mean a reckless abandonment of everything that age has sanctified with its holy seal.

Is a thing the worse for being well approved by age? Do we feel less kindly toward our President that in his recent inauguration he put aside the new imprint of the Scriptures that he might take the oath of office upon his mother's Bible? Were the truths in that Bible the less acceptable to a man abreast of the times, because his mother had loved and cherished them?

This is the charge which is brought against dogma.

It has forsooth "been handed down." The word is used for frightening timid people. In fact a dogma is nothing more nor less than a formulated truth bearing the marks of age and of long trial and the warrant of venerable authority. Charcoal and diamonds are both essentially the same—both carbon: charcoal was made but yesterday, while diamonds have been under pressure for ages. Current opinions are loose charcoal, a dogma is a solitaire.

God forbid that we should refuse to welcome a new truth! But, by the same token, God forbid that we should part with the old without just reason for rejecting it! Let us sing with all our hearts,

"Ring out the old,  
Ring in the new."

And with all our hearts let us add—

"Ring out the false,  
Ring in the true."

The Jews lost their ancestral possessions because they gave no heed to the divine sanctions which would have preserved them, and they were sent forth a nomad and bewildered race of peddlers and pawnbrokers. It is an easy thing to lose one's spiritual inheritance. Let us take heed therefore to the landmarks.

That was wise counsel which the aged Paul gave to his son Timothy, "Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and in the Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." O friend, let no man rob thee of thy patrimony of truth and virtue; let no man take thy crown!



## THE LEAST COMMANDMENT.

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“If a bird’s nest chance to be before thee in the way, in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young; but thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days.”

DEUT. 22:6, 7.

THE Jewish lawyer was a doctor of divinity. The law schools of the olden times were theological seminaries. This was made necessary by the fact that the government of Israel was a Theocracy. Its jurisprudence was based on the Scriptures, as indeed the jurisprudence of all the civilized nations of the earth rests upon the Word of God.

In the rabbinical schools of Israel much attention was given to word-weaving and letter-worship. The lawyers were fond of counting and measuring all the precepts of the moral and ceremonial law. They said there are two hundred and forty-eight affirmative and three hundred and sixty-five negative precepts, which make a total of six hundred and thirteen, that being the number of letters in the Decalogue and also, strange to tell, the number of veins and arteries in the human body. The same conclusion was reached in another way. The fringe of the rabbinical robe was called *tsitsith*, the letters of which, being used numerically, made a total of six hundred; to this add eight for the threads of the braid and five for the knots, and you have again six hundred and thirteen—the full number of the precepts of the law.

It was also considered a fine matter to discriminate between the relative importance of the various precepts. Some were light and others heavy, they said. As to which was the greatest of the commandments there was a difference of opinion. Some said it was the Sabbath law, others the injunction against idolatry, others still, the rule prescribing the breadth of the phylacteries. The lawyer who came to Jesus with the query "Which is the greatest commandment?" was tempting him, i. e., testing his rabbinical wisdom. When the Lord said, "How readest thou?" he may have pointed to the band upon the lawyer's forehead, whereon was written, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord;" and "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." The Lord pronounced this to be the greatest of the commandments and added, to the lawyer's discomfiture, that the second was similar, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." But whatever difference of opinion there may have been as to the greatest commandment, there was a general consensus as to the least. It was the precept touching the despoiling of a bird's nest. We shall see, however, that there was not sufficient ground for this conclusion. We have here a very important commandment, and there are some very salutary lessons to be learned from it.

I. A lesson in *particular ethics*. Blessed is the man who has a conscience quick to discern between the right and wrong in small matters. There is, indeed, a popular prejudice against scrupulosity. But why should this be? Our word scruple is derived from the Latin *scrupulus*, meaning a small stone or bit of gravel. It seems a slight matter; but if it be under a man's eyelid it assumes a supreme importance; or even in his shoe it gives him no

end of pain, yet not so unless he step upon it. So is it with a sensitive conscience. The pain is a word of warning. It is wise to heed the scruple lest there be a permanent injury to conscience.

We speak of little sins, but there are none. There is no trifle in moral casuistry. How do we estimate the strength of a building? By taking the average of the stones and beams? No; rather by finding the weakest stone in the foundation, the one that has a flaw running through it. How do we estimate the staunchness of a ship? By taking the girth of its massive hulk? or calculating the trustworthiness of its clamps and rivets? No, but by finding its one worm-eaten plank. How do we estimate the strength of a bridge? By the imposing appearance of its piers or the bulk of its cables? No, rather by the weakest link in the chains that anchor its great spans. How do we know the strength of a tiger's cage? By finding its weakest bar, for this lets the tiger out. And strength of character is measured in the same way. We go round about it until we find a point whereat it yields to a darling sin. Thus it is wisely written, "He that offendeth in one point is guilty of the whole law."

We speak of small duties—there are none. The least of our moral obligations has in it the sanctity of a divine edict. We are compassed about by whispers; "Do this," says the still voice, or "Do that." And our character depends upon our heeding it. In the Cathedral of Modena there is a bucket which once belonged to the public well. It was stolen by some soldiers in a frolic. Inquiry was made and the bucket was passed from hand to hand. At length it came into the possession of the young Prince Henry of Sardinia. A battle was fought to secure it. Prince Henry was made a prisoner. His imperial father

offered a gold chain seven miles long for his ransom. It was refused. The Prince lay twenty years in prison, pined away and died. Meanwhile a war was fomented in which most of the Governments of Europe engaged and which involved the loss of thousands of lives. Oh no, there are no trifles in human life. Or, if there are, we are not competent to determine upon them. We cannot tell the reach of their issues. "How far yon little candle throws its beams." The safe plan is to heed the divine voice in all matters whatsoever. "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it."

II. A lesson in the *law of kindness*. We have in this precept not merely a precaution against the extirpation of a species, but a command that advantage shall not be taken of a mother-bird by reason of her solicitude for her brood.

We emphasize the duty of beneficence towards our fellow-man. The good Samaritan is our ideal. But the law of kindness goes far deeper. It obliges us to take an interest in the comfort and well-being of our poor relations in the lower orders of life.

(1.) Here is a question of rights. Has a dumb creature any rights which the lords of creation are bound to respect? Jeremy Bentham says wisely, "That interrogatory must be settled by this other, Can they suffer?" Anything that can suffer has rights. Theodore Parker says that when a mere lad he saw a turtle on a log and, seizing a stone, crept cautiously towards it; he raised the stone, but heard a voice within and could not throw it. He ran to his mother and asked her what this meant. She told him that it was the protest of the doctrine of rights; in other words, the voice of God.

(2.) Here also is a question of privilege, the high priv-

ilege of manhood. Thoreau, of Concord, went out to dwell in the woods near Walden Pond. He took no gun or rod. The animals soon found him out and said, "Here is a man that means no harm." The squirrels came and nestled under his waistcoat; the very fish in the pond seemed to know him. There was a pleasant understanding between him and the dumb creatures around him, and all the world loves Thoreau the better for it.

It is related of Abraham Lincoln that when he was going the rounds of the circuit court with a company of fellow-attorneys, the coach drove by a pool where a wretched swine was making vain efforts to extricate itself from the mire. The sight provoked laughter, but Lincoln was silent. After a while he said, "I don't know how you feel about it, gentlemen, but I have got to go back." And they watched him while he returned, went down into the mire and helped the poor creature out of its distress. We can but feel that there was somehow a vital connection between that incident and the one which afterwards made him immortal—the freeing of four millions of slaves.

(3.) Here also is a question of Christian principle. It has been said that a man is not a true Christian unless his cat and dog are the better for it. The Ancient Mariner was right when, at the door of the festal hall, he said :

" Farewell, farewell, but this I tell  
To thee, thou wedding-guest :  
He prayeth well who loveth well  
Both man and bird and beast.

" He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things both great and small ;  
For the dear God who loveth us,  
He made and loveth all."

III. Here is a lesson also respecting the *increase of faith*. In this small precept we have a deep insight into the mind of God.

He who guides the innumerable worlds in their orbits cares also for the least living thing. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" said the Lord; "and one of them shall not fall on the ground without thy Father." He saw the sparrows exposed for sale in the gateways of Jerusalem, plucked and strung on a willow twig, two for a farthing. And God cared for them. Then came that glorious *argumentum a fortiori*, "Shall he not much more care for you, O ye of little faith? The very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Why do we doubt the special providences of God? Was it strange that Molinæus, taking refuge in an oven on the night of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, should be spared? "O God," he prayed, "cover me with thy hand!" And while he prayed a spider wove its web across the oven's mouth; a gust of wind filled the web with dust; the dew came down and in the early morning glistened upon it. The fugitive's heart stood still as the footfall of his pursuers came nigh; but seeing the spider's web, they said, "He is not here," and passed on. Thus the God who hears the chirp of the sparrow hearkens to his people's cry. "Are ye not of more value than many sparrows, and shall he not care for you?"

O friend, art thou cumbered with much serving? burdened with the cares of a busy life? "Unbind thy brow," as quaint George Herbert says. Take no anxious thought. Rest thou in God. Wait thou upon him. He that believeth shall not make haste. Art thou groping in quest of truth as blind men feel their way along the wall? Art thou eager to know the great verities? Let Him take thy



hand and lead thee into light. Let him lead thee to Calvary, where the voice speaks, "Thy sins be forgiven thee!" and then let him lead thee over the hill of Redemption into the tasks and responsibilities of an earnest life. Art thou afraid of the future? Ah yes, we are all afraid. Who knoweth what the future, what the morrow, shall bring forth? But why should we fear? "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." The Lord, who remembers the mother-bird and her unfledged young, will not be unmindful of us. To-morrow is a grisly giant, who, like Goliath, comes to meet us, brandishing a spear like a weaver's beam, and saying, "I will give thy carcass to the beasts and the vultures." But let us gather up the Lord's promises as the stripling took the smooth stones from the brook for his sling, and let us go forth and meet this giant in full confidence, saying, "Thou comest to me with sword and buckler, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord my God." O blessed faith! Believe—only believe; be able to say, with the apostle Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

Of all that the poet Bryant has written there is nothing more helpful than his "Ode to a Water-fowl." Its lesson is plain to one who has ever noted the lone wanderer separated by the huntsman's gun from his fellows, pursuing his way at a majestic height, guided unerringly along the path marked out for him:

"Whither, 'midst falling dew,  
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,  
Far through their rosy depths dost thou pursue  
Thy solitary way?"

"Vainly the fowler's eye  
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,  
As darkly limned upon the crimson sky  
Thy figure floats along.

"Seek'st thou the plashy brink  
Of weedy lake or marge of river wide,  
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink  
On the chafed ocean side?

"There is a Power whose care  
Teaches thy way along the pathless coast,  
The desert and illimitable air,  
Lone wandering but not lost.

"All day thy wings have fanned  
At that far height the cold thin atmosphere,  
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,  
Though the dark night is near.

"And soon thy toil shall end ;  
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest  
And scream among thy fellows ; reeds shall bend  
Soon o'er thy sheltered nest.

"Thou art gone ! The abyss of heaven  
Hath swallowed up thy form ; yet in my heart  
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,  
And shall not soon depart.

"*He who from zone to zone  
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,  
In the long way that I must tread alone  
Will lead my steps aright.*"

## SINGING AS WE JOURNEY.

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“And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.” Matt. 26:30.

THE upper chamber in Jerusalem, Thursday, thirteenth Nisan. A memorable time and a memorable place. It was then and there that Jesus, girding himself with a towel, and basin in hand, washed his disciples' feet, saying, “I have given you an example, that ye should do unto one another as I have done unto you.” It was then and there that he instituted the Holy Supper, the simple feast of bread and wine which through all the centuries has commemorated his vicarious death. It was then and there that he bequeathed to his disciples his unspeakable peace, “Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” It was then and there He made his priestly supplication, “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee. I pray for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine: all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.”

Then, the sermon and prayer being over, they sang a hymn and went out. As was customary on the night preceding the Passover, they doubtless sang the great Hallel, “Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, his mercy endureth for ever. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacle of the righteous. The

right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner. Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Bind the sacrifice with cords fast unto the horns of the altar. Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for he good, his mercy endureth for ever."

I. It is pleasant to know that Jesus sang. We sometimes think of him as an austere man. In *Quentin Matsy's* masterpiece he is represented with dishevelled locks, hollowed cheeks, eyes dimmed, and brows overarched with anguish — a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. He was, however, no cynic, no anchorite, but a man among men. It is not recorded that he ever laughed, yet his heart must have been full of laughter; for, seeing the sorrow of the world, he saw the joy beyond it. All men laugh unless they are stolid or dyspeptic, and he was neither. On this occasion he was passing into the dark shadow of the cross, yet he joined in the great Hallel, "Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever."

Why should not Jesus sing?

(I.) His heart was in sympathy with all things pure and lovely and of good report. The town where he spent his boyhood is overlooked by a precipitous hill six hundred feet above the level of the sea. It is not to be doubted that oftentimes he climbed up yonder to commune with God. The mountain flowers were about his feet, and every one of them was like a swinging censer full of perfume. All about him were orchards and vineyards and verdant pastures, and every grass-blade was inscribed with his Father's name. He watched the eagles poisoning in the cloudless azure and heard the hum of busy life in the village below; saw Tabor to the eastward clothed

with oak and terebinth, and beyond the western hills the mists rising from the Great Sea; to the south lay the plain of Esdraelon, scene of a hundred battles, and far beyond were the gleaming domes of the Holy City. How the soul of this Jewish youth must have rejoiced in the memories of the past and in the promises of the future triumph of Israel's God! His heart gave thanks with the leaping of the brooks; the birds sang and he sang with them.

(2.) Why should not Jesus sing? He had a clear conscience, of all living men the one only who knew no sin. He only could go to his rest at eventide with no cry, "Have mercy upon me, O God! against thee have I sinned and done evil in thy sight." For him there were no vain regrets, no "might have beens." There was no guile in his heart, no guile on his lips. He was conscious of no war in his members, his soul was set on the discharge of duty. Out on yonder hilltop he watched the sun rise, "as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race." He himself had thus issued from the palace of heaven. He had before him the great work of redemption. No being in the universe ever confronted so stupendous a task, yet he shrank not, murmured not. "Lo, I come," said he; "in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God."

(3.) Why should not Jesus sing? He clearly foresaw the ultimate triumph of truth and goodness. "For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, despising the shame." Out on yonder hill at evening he watched the sun go down in golden glory. Red banners waved; the spear-points of the heavenly host shone with crimson splendor as they came forth marching to the great

Armageddon, the final consummation of all things. Up yonder he heard the clash of arms and the cry, "Babylon the great has fallen! has fallen!" and the rattle of chains as the great enemy fell headlong into the abyss, and then a rolling back of the mighty gates and the glad acclaim of welcome, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory." He saw thus the end from the beginning. He knew that he was to see the fruit of the travail of his soul. He knew that his blood would water the world's wildernesses until they should bloom like rose gardens. He knew that, whatever rebuffs and reverses there might be, truth and righteousness were sure to triumph in the end.

"The eternal step of Progress beats  
To that great anthem, strong and slow,  
Which God repeats."

There would be martyr-fires and persecutions and the souls of the faithful would tremble within them, but his trembled not.

"Take heart, the waster builds again;  
A charmed life old Goodness hath.  
The tares may perish, but the grain  
Is not for death."

He knew that through all the vicissitudes of history the irresistible God would sit upon his throne, that everything would be overruled to His ultimate glory. Oh if we could only perceive this! If only we had somewhat of the Master's faith!

"God works in all things; all obey  
His first propulsion from the night;  
Wait, thou, and watch, the world is gray  
With morning light."



II. Observe that the disciples of Jesus sang with him. The visible Church was gathered around the sacramental table that night, and the upper chamber was filled with the gladness of thanksgiving. I seem to hear two voices, deep and rotund, accustomed to shouting through the turmoil of the stormy lake—the Sons of Thunder. Another voice is a clear tenor, sonorous and perceptible among them all, that of Matthew the publican. Another is timid and tremulous, for neither in song nor otherwise was doubting Thomas ever quite sure of himself. One was a hoarse, strident voice, making discord; brave, blundering Peter might have no voice nor ear for music, but sure am I he always did his part in making a joyful noise unto the Lord. And while all these united in the great Hallel, under the windows a watchman, or some belated Jerusalemite perhaps, paused and listened and wondered who could be singing thus at dead of night.

This was the beginning of the singing church. Tacitus says that the Christians were wont to rise at daybreak and in retired places sing to the honor of the Christ, whom they worshipped as God. The Church of Jesus Christ has come down through the ages like a bird singing ever with the dew of morning on its wings.

(1.) It is meet and proper that we should sing in the services of the sanctuary. In Solomon's temple, when the sons of Asaph in their white linen raised the tune, accompanied with the great orchestra of harps and cymbals and followed by the mighty choirs shouting back from the galleries in antiphonal service, the cloudy Presence came forth from behind the fine-twined curtains and filled the sacred place; so while we sing, the doors of the sanctuary move upon their hinges and He enters, whose presence brings to us fulness of life and joy.

(2.) It is meet and proper that we should always sing as we go about our tasks. The carpenter does better work if he whistles as he drives his plane. The Puritan girl in "The Minister's Wooing," humming the old Psalm tunes, might well make her lover think of heaven and angels. The soldiers, a hundred locked to every one of the great guns, vainly sought to climb the steep ascent of St. Bernard until the flutes struck up *La Marseillaise*, "Ye sons of freedom, wake to glory!" We also lift our burdens the more easily, meet our sorrows the more resignedly, perform our services and tasks the more joyously, when God's praises are ringing in our hearts.

(3.) And in sorrow God giveth his people "songs in the night." Paul and Silas at Philippi, their feet in the stocks, their backs tingling with the pain of recent scourging, made the dungeon ring with song, insomuch "that the prisoners heard them." It was a most unusual sound. Those dark corridors had rung with oaths and curses many a time; but who were these that could uplift at midnight the melodies of thanksgiving? "The prisoners heard them." Ay, beloved, the prisoners always hear us when we praise God in the darkness. And why should we not? We do not sorrow as those who are without hope. Has Death entered your doorway? Then conventionality has always said, "Draw the blinds, shut out the sunlight, drape the mirrors, weep copious tears." But God's angels come, saying, "Ye are not children of the darkness but of the light; sing therefore,

"Let sorrow's rudest tempest blow,  
Each chord on earth to sever:  
Our King says, 'Come!' and there's our home,  
For ever and for ever."

Old wrinkled Time says, "This is not your abiding-

place." The angel says, "Ye seek another country, even a heavenly, and a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Sing then,

"O mother dear, Jerusalem, when shall I come to thee?

When shall my sorrows have an end, thy joys when shall I see?"

Pilgrim, in the allegory, went singing clear from the City of Destruction to heaven's pearly gate. He sang as he dragged himself out of the Slough of Despond, as he climbed the Hill of Difficulty, after his fight with Apollyon, past the Giant's cave, in the Pleasant Meadows, by the River of Life, when he escaped from Doubting Castle, as he journeyed through the Delectable Gardens in the land of Beulah, and so until he passed through heaven's gate. Nor did his singing end there, nor shall ours end there.

Could we look aloft at this moment and see through the open windows, our eyes would be dazzled by the effulgence of the glory which gathers about Him who sitteth upon the throne; we should hear the four-and-twenty elders lift their voices in the great Hallel and the circle of angels and archangels, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, swelling the great anthem, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever and ever," and the still greater multitude which no man can number, of saints triumphant, adding their voices to the general praise, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing."

But, good friend, you cannot join this chorus unless you believe in Christ; it is faith that pitches the tune. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? We must stand with him at the Sacrament in the upper cham-

ber and hear his assurance of pardon and receive his benediction, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid," if you would make mirth in your heart unto him. Let us pray the prayer of David, "Open thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth thy praise," for our sins, our shame, and our sorrow have closed our lips. God's love in Jesus Christ can put into our hands the harp that too long has hung upon the willows and can attune our souls to the song of salvation. "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."

THE HAPPY MAN.

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Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful: but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.

PSALM I.

THE opening words of this Psalm furnish its title, *Ashrey ha-ish*, literally, O the happinesses of that man! It is as if the Psalmist were present and bidding us behold in this Happy Man a realization of the universal hope. For there is no person living who does not desire to be happy. Yet this desire is likely to be thwarted by the very eagerness with which we pursue it. It is a true saying, "Happiness is a coy jade, ever fleeing from him who pursueth her."

"No man," said Solon, "is happy until, mayhap, after he dies." The testimony of Abd-er-Rahman, the Caliph of Cordova, was of similar import. "Fifty years have elapsed," said he, "since I began to rule; I have had friends, riches, and honors in abundance. On reckoning up the days wherein I could say I was happy in them, I find they have been fourteen days in all."

If ever a man pursued happiness under the most favorable conditions, it was King Solomon. He had

wealth without stint. He sat upon a golden bull, with six golden lions at his feet. His stables were on the most magnificent scale. His gardens were called paradises. An army of cup-bearers and other attendants waited upon him. He had men and women singers and all sorts of retainers to delight him. Yet this was his conclusion of the whole matter, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." And with respect to the pursuit of pleasure particularly, he said, "Of laughter, it is mad ; and of mirth, what doeth it?"

But here our attention is directed to a happy man. John Trapp said quaintly, in 1660, "The Psalmist hath said here more to the point respecting happiness than all the philosophers ; for while they beat the bush, he hath put the bird into our hand."

I. As to the character of this happy man. "He walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." In other words, he is described as being in the world but not of it.

A man who would meet the conditions of his being must be in the world as a living part of it. The Master's plea for his disciples was, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." The monks of the olden time made a great mistake when, feeling that the world was very evil, they sought to escape defilement by retiring from it. In the solitude of the cloisters they passed the time in droning their prayers, in illuminating missals, and counting their beads. Under the very shadow of the monastery walls the unshod people were crying out in their distress for everything that makes life worth the living. There was a famine of the Word, there was a universal call for



help ; but the anchorites at their solitary devotions made no response to it. No, this is not the Christian life. We must needs be in the world—not dreamers among the shadows, but men among men. The world has need of us. The workshop and the office demand us. The secular cares of this world are, of necessity, upon us. Let us fall in with the glorious army of producers and desire to add to the world's possession of material good. To be diligent in business is an essential part of a religious life. Our Lord might have come upon his great errand of deliverance in the guise of a heavenly prince with the halo about his brow, but he did not. He might have come as a philosopher, holding himself aloof from the masses, dreaming dreams and seeing visions, but he did not. He was a man of the people, one of the great multitude of average men. He entered into the fellowship of common toil, made ploughs and harrows, talked with his fellow-townsmen about the passing affairs of life, and was a man among men—as we should be.

But the secret of true happiness is non-conformity. Being in the world, we should not be of it. While our associations must needs be in some measure with the ungodly, their counsels, their way, and their seats are not for us. There is a vital difference between those whose interests are absorbed in the perishable things of this world and such as have their conversation in heaven—as real a difference as there is between a light-ship anchored far out at sea, tossed by the winds, beaten by the roaring storms, yet never moved from its moorings, and the mighty ship that sails past with its canvas set, breasting the waves and hastening on to its desired haven. God's people go to their offices and their work-shops just like other men, but their affections are not set upon

this world; they are ever mindful of their noble birth, their divine inheritance, their glorious destiny. Their happiness is not worn upon their sleeves; but they know that earth is not their abiding-place, and that after a while their pilgrimage will end in a blaze of glory at heaven's gate.

It is written, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed and went out, not knowing whither he went." No doubt, as he journeyed along the banks of the Euphrates, he passed through many a hamlet where men were dwelling in houses which their fathers had built. And doubtless they said, "Abide with us." But the voice from heaven bade him journey on. We also have no abiding city here. We dwell in tabernacles, looking for a better country, even a heavenly, and for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

The man who realizes this non-conformity in his daily life has reached the state of truest happiness which this world can give. He is superior to all the vicissitudes of this present world. His life is hid with Christ in God. Oh the happinesses of that man!

II. The secret of the happiness of that man is said to be in *his attitude towards the divine law*. The "Law of the Lord" was a Jewish phrase for the Scriptures. The happy man possesses a right estimate of the importance of the Word of God.

In one of Joseph Parker's sermons he says, "Why is there so much incertitude in Christian profession and of inconsistency in Christian life? Because we have lost our Bible." I do not believe, however, that the case is so bad. It is true that a multitude of people are losing

their faith in the Scriptures as an infallible rule of faith and practice. And wherever that occurs the result is doubt and bewilderment. For this reason it is surmised that the present biblical controversy is unspeakably portentous of evil. We have confidence to believe, however, that the vast multitudes of God's people are still loyal to revealed truth. They still hearken to the divine oracle as the court of last appeal in all matters of truth and righteousness. They believe with all their hearts in these things which have been revealed from on high through holy men who wrote as they were moved by the Spirit of God.

(1.) The man who by reason of his happiness is here called to our attention as "that man," is said to be a reader of the Scriptures.

It is one of the hopeful signs of the times that the army of young people who constitute the Society of Christian Endeavor are pledged as follows: "Trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ for strength, I promise him that I will do whatever he would like to have me do; that I will make it the rule of my life to pray and to read the Bible every day."

No man can be a happy Christian who does not hold communion with God through the appointed means. Thomas á Kempis said, "I am never so happy as when in a nook with the Book."

(2.) The man here referred to reads the Scriptures "with delight."

We are much given in these times to a critical study of the Word. It must not be assumed, however, that the biblical expert gets the deepest or most comprehensive grasp of the truth. The way to appreciate the beauty of Murillo's picture of the Immaculate Conception is not to

approach it with spatula and ammonia for purposes of minute analysis, but rather to gaze upon it until we are filled with the mighty thoughts that went surging through the soul of the master genius who painted it. It is quite possible to know a thing too well to understand it. In all literature there is scarcely anything finer than Mark Antony's oration over the body of Cæsar, yet we smile at the mere suggestion of it :

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears ;  
I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.  
The evil that men do lives after them ;  
The good is oft interréd with their bones :  
So let it be with Cæsar."

The reason why it fails to impress us is because in the old school-days we parsed the life out of it. We resolved its oratorical beauty into mere nominative cases and transitive verbs. It is much to be feared that in like manner we fritter away the glory of the Scriptures in mere analysis. However we may devote ourselves to the criticism of the text, let us be sure that the immense verities and spiritual sublimities do not lose their hold upon us.

(3) This happy man not only reads the Scriptures with delight, but he meditates in them.

The introduction of the art of printing has not been without its compensation of evil. Time was when the Bible was chained to the cathedral altar. In those days it was a labor of love to reach it. The penitent sinner came and turned over the leaves of the parchment until he came to the place where it is written, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool!" He read that over and over again and took it away with

him. The man in trouble came and knelt, with his great burden, before the pages of the chained book and found the place where it says, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And he rolled that over like a sweet morsel under his tongue and gave it a lodgment in heart and memory. The little children were brought by their parents and permitted to touch the passage where it says, "Suffer the children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And though possibly they never saw the book again in all their lives, they remembered that and were helped by it. But nowadays we read and run, and running we forget. We need to cultivate the habit of meditating in the Word. For truth is inexhaustible; it is a bottomless mine of strength and comfort. The deeper we dig, the more gold we get. The word "meditateth" in this place is rendered by St. Augustine, "chattereth." In God's law this man "chattereth day and night." So in these spring-time days as we pass along the streets we hear the sparrows chattering with their hearts full of the prophecy of bloom and fruitfulness. So glad and happy are the souls that meditate with delight in the divine law. The truth is like an Oriental bride who never lifts her veil save for the one who loves her. To see her face is the privilege of the chosen one. Oh the happinesses of that man!

III. We observe now the outcome of this happy life, to wit, fruitfulness. "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water!"

(1) This life is rooted well. It is nourished by the river that flows from the throne of God.

(2.) Its leaf also shall not wither. It is the leaf that shows the character of the tree. An elm does not need

to cry aloud, "I am an elm-tree," nor a maple, "I am a maple-tree," for the passer-by can lift his eyes to the foliage and readily distinguish between them. The man whose soul is full of truth and righteousness need not be saying perpetually, "I am a Christian," for his walk and conversation declare it.

(3.) He bringeth forth his fruit in due season. In the parable of the vine and its branches a profound emphasis is put upon fruitfulness. "If ye abide in Christ and he in you, ye shall bring forth fruit, much fruit, more fruit, continually." In other words, we shall be ever doing good as we have opportunity. No man is guaranteed that happiness who has not known the generous pleasure of a kindly deed. It is related of Alexander the Great that while hunting in the forest, having ridden ahead of his suite, he heard a groan and following it came upon a sore wounded man. He bent over him, lifted his head, chafed his temples, and did his utmost to restore him. When one of his courtiers came the Emperor greeted him with the cry, "Oh this is the happiest day of my life! I have saved a man!" He had subdued kingdoms; the possessions of vast empires were subject to his command; the dream of universal conquest had been almost realized in his career; yet he had never known such pleasure as in helping this destitute and distressed one. And indeed this is the very consummation of human joy. He who follows most closely in the footsteps of Jesus, who went about doing good, comes nearest to the possession of happiness; as it is written, "Oh the happinesses of that man!"

There is, however, an obverse of this picture. The life of the righteous is here summed up in one word, "prosperity." "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." The



contrast is marked in two words, "The ungodly are *not so*."

(1.) As to his life—it is *chaff*. The wind sweepeth over the threshing-floor and driveth it away. You cannot gather it up, there is no profit in it.

(2.) As to his death, it is like a furrow in the sea—"the way of the ungodly shall perish." When the farmer drives his plough through the soil, it means that a harvest will follow for the hungry ones; and when the keel of the vessel cuts the surface of the sea, there is a furrow marked by a stream of phosphorescent light; the light vanishes, the waves sweep over, and all is gone.

(3.) And after death he shall, "not stand in judgment." It was that word "judgment" that made Felix tremble in his audience-room at Cæsarea. There is a certain fearful looking forward to judgment in every impenitent heart. The man who lives aright sees heaven's windows open above him and hears the songs of the angelic host. But the ungodly are *not so*.

It is safe to say that most of us have been disappointed in our pursuit of happiness. There is however a right way and a sure way to pursue it. Jesus was the busiest of men. Whether in the workshop or "going about doing good," he was always happy. And when he died on the accursed tree with the darkness closing around him, oh then his cup of happiness ran over; for "He saw of the travail of his soul and was satisfied." If we would be happy let us join our fortunes with his. Let us sell all and come and follow him. At his right hand are pleasures for evermore. The princes of the olden time were wont to take their distinguished guests into their wine cellars and open for them the old vintages. Our Lord invites his guests into the heavenly gardens, "Come

into my garden and eat my pleasant fruits ; take of the pomegranates, gather the clusters, pluck the apples from the tree of life, dip down into the waters of the King's well." Ay, here are pleasures for evermore. To be one with Jesus Christ in self-denial, in labor of love and of hope, is to enter into his joy. "These things have I spoken unto you," said he, "that my joy might be filled in you and that your joy might be full."

We shall never realize the full meaning of those words until we see him standing at heaven's gate and saying, "Well done ; enter into the joy of thy Lord."

## WHAT MAKES A GENTLEMAN?

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The servant of the Lord must be gentle unto all. 2 TIM. 2:24.

THE word "gentleman" is not found in the Scriptures. There is, however, much about manhood there—as in the exhortation, "Quit yourselves like men; be strong," and in the call to perfect manhood in "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"—which completely covers the case. For there is no true standard of gentlemanliness which has not manhood for its basis. The flaccid young fellows who arrogate to themselves this title upon no better ground than the possession of a patrimony and an acquaintance with the latest fashions in haberdashery are not gentlemen at all.

We want a definition to begin with. What is a gentleman? In Johnson's old dictionary the word is said to include all above the rank of yeoman. Sir Thomas Smith in his "Commonwealth" says, 'Whosoever studieth in the university, and professeth liberal science, and can live without labor, and beareth the charge and countenance of a gentleman, shall be called so.' In the "Merry Wives of Windsor" we have an old-time silhouette—"A gentleman born, master parson, who writes himself *Armigero*; in any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation, *Armigero*." Chapman says:

"Measure not thy carriage by any man's eye,  
Thy speech by no man's ear;  
But be resolute and confident,  
And this is the grace of a right gentleman."

Sir Philip Sidney, quite competent to speak as being himself the knight without reproach, puts all the chivalric virtues into one brief sentence, "High thoughts seated in a heart of courtesie."

Webster states it almost as briefly, "A gentleman is one of education and good breeding." The gentleman's portrait moreover is clearly drawn in Paul's First Epistle to Timothy, as one "blameless, vigilant, sober, and of good behavior." In other words, a gentleman is simply the highest style of man. He may wear a threadbare coat, may be penniless and friendless, but a man's heart is beating in his breast.

I. The distinguishing feature of the gentleman—when viewed by himself alone—is *self-respect*. Milton said, "The pious and just honoring of ourselves may be thought the radical moisture and fountain head from whence every laudable and worthy enterprise issues forth."

By self-respect we do not mean vanity. Vanity is a totally different thing. Vanity is the characteristic of a coxcomb. In the moral province it assumes the form of self-righteousness, and the outcome is a purblind Pharisee. A moment of introspection must take the conceit out of any honest man. For the inward look discovers the fact that he is a sinner. "Naaman the Syrian was a mighty man of valor—but he was a leper;" that fact must have humbled all his pride.

But the fact that we are sinners does not affect our divine birth or the glorious possibilities before us. The human soul is

"A beam ethereal, sullied, and absorpt,  
Though sullied and dishonored, still divine."

Our sin may be forgiven, our chains broken, and our

original estate recovered. Meanwhile, alas for him who forgets his high dignity as a child of the living God.

A rational self-respect proceeds not only from a due consideration of the natural glory of manhood, but, moreover, from the possession of certain manly graces, such as truth, purity, and moral sensitiveness.

A gentleman is a man of *truth*. His sense of honor makes and keeps him so. Says Calvert: "He may brush his own shoes or clothes, or mend or make them, or roughen his hands with a helve, or foul them with dye-work or iron-work; but he must not foul his mouth with a lie." "Will you have the word of a king?" said Charles I. to his commoners. "Nay, more; I give you the word of a gentleman." When one's nice regard for truth, candor, and sincerity goes out, forthwith shame comes in.

He must also be a man of *purity*. Never will he descend to the vocabulary of the bar-room. Many a young man has a breath fouled beyond all sweetening of cloves and cardamoms. A low jest leaves behind it a festering sore. Vulgarity prints itself on the cheeks and in the eyes. The sky is full of pictures, and the fields are full of daisies; why should a young man seek his pleasure in mire and stagnant pools?

"Pick from thy mirth all filthiness:

'T is the scum with which coarse wits abound;

The fine may spare it."

The gentleman will be possessed also of *moral sensitiveness*—an essential part of honor. Lord Chesterfield was a gambler and therefore no gentleman. He wrote to his son a series of elaborate letters on courtesy, yet that son died in the gutter. The trouble lay in a blunted moral sense. Beau Brummel was called the first gentle-

man of Europe ; he required a quarter of an hour for the creasing down of his cravat. Yet one of his precepts was that we should not annoy ourselves with questions of conscience. Therefore the world calls him no longer a gentleman, but a knave, a dram-drinker, and a rake.

II. The gentleman, when viewed in relation to others, is characterized by *courtesy*. Courtesy is the finest of human graces. It exacts a recognition of the just claims of all sorts and conditions of men. It accepts the apostle Peter's admonition, "Honor all men."

It rules out servility, for it is founded in the truth of human equality. No gentleman can allow that God ever created a man with larger natural rights than his own. "The rank is but the guinea's stamp ; the man's the gowd." But there are certain relations founded in the divine ordinance which impose upon us the duty of subjection without a murmur. Thus it is written, "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." And again it is written, "Honor the king," that is, the constituted authority. Law is a sacred word to a gentleman. He regards the powers that be as entitled to reverence because they are ordained of God.

A still severer test of gentility is in one's bearing towards those whom adventitious circumstances have placed beneath him. You never know whether a patrician is a gentleman until you have observed his treatment of his valet. The last words of Wellington seem commonplace at first glimpse, but in reality they were quite worthy of "the iron duke." A trusted servant pressed upon him a cup of tea, saying, "Will you drink, my lord?" "Yes, if you please."

But the acid test is in one's treatment of the poor and



suffering. No gentleman ever laughs at a stammerer or is surly to a child. It was said by Edmund Burke a hundred years ago that chivalry was dead. It is indeed true that knights go forth no more, with crosses on their breasts and ladies' gloves fluttering from their spear-points, to avenge the wronged and vindicate the weak.

"Their swords are rust,  
Their good steeds dust,  
Their souls are with their God, we trust."

But the spirit of true chivalry survives and is constantly showing itself in valorous and magnanimous deeds. A few years ago the ship "Birkenhead" struck upon a hidden rock and, the sea pouring rapidly in, her crew and passengers knew that she must go down. On board were the Ninety-first Highlanders under command of Captain Wright. The order was given to place the women and children in the boats. This being done, the skipper bade the crew shift for themselves, and they struck out for the already overladen boats. Captain Wright ordered the bugle call; whereat his men mustered on the upper deck as if on dress parade. The ship reeled and staggered before her final plunge. A last order was given; the Highlanders closed ranks, fired a *feu de joie*, and went down. Oh no! while such things are done upon the earth it is not fair to say that chivalry is dead. The Golden Rule is not a dead letter. The mind that was in Christ Jesus is, in lesser degree, in multitudes of men.

III. The invoice of the graces of gentlemanliness is not complete until we have considered man in respect to God. We may not leave God out of the reckoning. In this relation the characteristic of a gentleman is *devotion*. At this point there are three considerations which press themselves upon us.

*First*, Providence. In God we live and move and have our being. We slept in his arms last night; he has cared for us all through the day. In our relations with our fellow-men we count it a matter of common courtesy to recognize a favor with thanks. Shall we withhold from God the meed of courtesy which we concede to our fellow-men? We breathe his air; we eat his food; we are the recipients of his favor continually. Is it too much to kneel down and say "I thank thee"? Is there one among us who has not prayed or otherwise confessed his obligations to the Giver of all good this day? To such a one I say in all candor, "Sir, by any test of gentility that obtains in common life, you are no gentleman."

*Second*, Grace. If it be true that God gave his only-begotten and well-beloved Son to die for our salvation; if it be true that his blood is the ransom paid for our redemption, then it follows that we are placed under a mighty obligation; and as honorable men we should give ourselves no rest until we have discharged it. It is written "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price," not silver and gold, but the precious blood of Jesus, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. The man who rejects Christ can give a reason for repudiating this debt; but the man who believes the old, old story and still withholds his service from Christ is *ipso facto* a defaulter. If there is one such in this presence, I say to him in all frankness that until he does his utmost to meet the obligation which he acknowledges, he is no gentleman. For true gentlemen are wont to pay their honest debts.

*Third*, the wonderful life. Christ was in the world not only to redeem it, but to set forth in his own character and in his own walk and conversation the pattern of a holy life. In him we behold the highest type of man.

“The best of men that e’er wore earth about him  
Was a sufferer, a calm, meek, patient, loving spirit,  
The first true Gentleman that ever lived.”

To be like Jesus is to attain to the full stature of man. The imitation of Christ is therefore the most important business of life.

When Thomas Hughes, the author of “Tom Brown at Oxford,” would select a theme wherein to set forth the chivalric graces, he chose “The Manliness of Christ.” This Christ was the Perfect One—so gentle towards weakness, so firm in his loyalty to truth and righteousness, so merciless towards all shams, so charitable in his treatment of the erring, so brave in defending the friendless, so forgiving of injury, so pure in word and deed, so heroic in death!

Wherefore, I pray you, in his name, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things. For these are things that make for manhood because they bring a man into Godlikeness.

“Come wealth or want, come good or ill,  
Let old and young accept their part  
And bow before the heavenly will,  
And bear it with an honest heart.

“Who misses or who wins the prize?  
Go, lose or conquer, as you can;  
But if you fail or if you rise,  
Be each, pray God, a gentleman.”

## DARKNESS AT HIGH NOON.

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"And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour." Mark 15:33.

THE battle of Waterloo, fought on the eighteenth of June, 1815, is possibly the turning-point of human history; it determined the adjustment of the nations and in some measure the destinies of the race. Victor Hugo calls it the "world's earthquake." But on April 7, A. D. 30, a greater battle than Waterloo was fought, in which infinitely larger issues were involved and on which depended the eternal future of all the children of men. On that day the Prince of Darkness, with all the legions of the infernal world, met Emmanuel who had come forth as the sole champion of our ruined race. There were legions of angels and archangels who were eager to participate, but it was ordained that Jesus should tread the wine-press alone. The gage of the conflict was the dominion of this world. For four thousand years Satan, as the prince of this world, had held the controlling influence. Here, on Calvary, the issue was joined, and for six awful hours truth and error, sin and righteousness, life and death, confronted each other in mortal conflict.

At noon on that memorable day, in the very thick of the conflict, the strange thing happened which is now to engage our thought. The sun was just crossing the meridian. It had been glowing like fire on the golden

dome of the temple yonder, and shining on the soldiers' shields and burnished spear-points. Pitilessly it blazed upon the agonizing figure on the cross. Then, on a sudden, for no perceptible reason, it seemed as if a thin veil were drawn before it. The air grew slowly sombre and lurid; the wind arose and made a plaintive moaning across the hills. Over on the slopes of Olivet the cattle laid themselves down as if the night were coming on. The birds fluttered to their nests. Soon the shadows closed in until it was no longer possible to read the inscriptions on the phylacteries of the rabbis who stood by. The last beam of light vanished, until one could not see the outline of the cross against the sky. Then deep silence settled down, broken only by the half-stifled sobbing of the women, the muttered oaths of the guards as they jostled each other in the dark, and the dropping of blood. Deep midnight darkness at high noon! What was the meaning of it?

I. Was it an eclipse? All attempts to eliminate the supernatural from this occurrence are in vain. We gain nothing by explaining away miracles, for indeed every breath we draw has a marvel in it. We live in the midst of the supernatural, and while we are putting one miracle out at the door, a thousand come swarming in at the windows. So, in the long run, we should gain nothing by assuming an eclipse here. But this hypothesis is out of the question: the darkness lasted too long, it extended too far. It was felt away in Egypt where Dionysius cried out that "one of the gods must be agonizing." And further, the conclusive answer to this vain hypothesis is in the fact that the Passover occurred at the time of the full moon. The miracle therefore stays; we cannot get rid of it.

II. But shall we say that this was an expression of the sympathy of nature for her dying Lord? And why not? When Lincoln was assassinated we draped our pulpits in black and hung the tokens of sympathy across our doorways. The nation, of whose government he was chief magistrate, went into mourning for his untimely taking off.

Is not this world the kingdom of our Lord? Did not he create it? There was not a bird or beast or creeping thing that was not under his sway. And trees and flowers—he made them all. Out of the hollow of his hand he poured the waters that filled the mighty deep. He set up the pillars of the universe. He reached out into space and took hold of nothing, like a magician, and when he withdrew his hand there was a world in it. One by one he spun the suns and stars out upon their orbits. The universe was his.

And now the King of this great kingdom was dying. Why should it not assume the trappings of woe?

"Well might the sun in darkness hide,  
And shut his glories in,  
When God, the mighty Maker, died  
For man, the creature's, sin."

III. Or was this an expression of divine indignation? the gathering frown on Jehovah's face? With what, then, was he angry? There is only one thing in the universe that can provoke the divine wrath, and that is sin. And here, on Calvary, was the consummation of four thousand years and more of persistent sin. God created our parents and blessed them and placed them in a garden where grew such sweet and pleasant flowers as nowhere else were seen; but they defied his authority and



broke his holy will, and then he drove them out and set the flaming sword of his anger at the garden-gate. As they multiplied and replenished the earth, he still environed them with his providence and blessed them with his grace. He bore with their transgressions and sent angel visitants to urge them to a holy life.

Then looking down from heaven to see if there were any that wrought righteousness, He was moved to say "There is none that doeth good, no, not one." And again his anger went forth against them; he opened the windows of heaven, unstopped the fountains of the great deep, and swept them all away. Then re-peopling the earth he renewed his goodness to the children of men. But all in vain, for they built altars to Baal and Astarte and gave themselves up to all manner of abominations, and so for centuries, until at last he sent his only-begotten Son to remonstrate with them. Then sin reached its ultimate; it thrust its dagger to the heart of God's well-beloved Son. Was it not meet that the divine face should gather into a frown that day?

Yet is not God angry with abstract sin; there is indeed no such thing as abstract sin. He was and is angry with sin in the concrete, as it dwells in you and in me. And there is a sense in which all sin has in it the nature of crucifixion. It is enmity against God. It rejects his overtures of mercy and lifts its hand against his well-beloved Son. Oh if we could but behold it with the divine eyes how should we hate and abhor it!

IV. Or shall we regard this darkness as setting forth the triumph of the wicked one? Here was the culmination of thirty years of war, for during all the earthly life and ministry of Jesus, the Prince of Darkness had set up obstacles and striven to thwart his divine purposes in

every way. He had tempted him, had embittered the hearts of his friends and brethren, had set the scribes and Pharisees to spy upon him, and laid all manner of pitfalls in his path. And all the while Jesus was going about doing good, preaching the glorious truth of the divine mercy, working miracles of healing, and setting forth in his walk and conversation the excellences of the holy life. And this was the end of it!

It must have been an hour of rejoicing in the infernal regions when the dark-winged messenger brought the tidings, "They have seized upon the Christ, have tried and condemned, have mocked and derided him; they have led him out to Calvary, have nailed him to the accursed tree and lo! he dies in anguish." What shouts of triumph then! "The kingdom shall still abide with us; fling out the banners of the night!"

But all their rejoicing was premature and momentary. On the cross, above the head of the dying Saviour, were four cabalistic letters, I. N. R. I., *Jesus Nazarenus, Rex Judæorum*. He is the King of the whole Israel of God. Had he not said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me"? And presently when he comes forth out of the darkness he will have at his girdle the keys of Death and Hell, and upon his vesture and thigh will be seen a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords; and from that moment he will go forth conquering and to conquer until the restitution of all things.

"All hail the power of Jesus' name,  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown him Lord of all!"

V. But while there is some measure of truth in all these suggestions, we have yet to mark the full signifi-

cance of this darkness at noon. It sets forth the exercise of the priestly function of Jesus for the deliverance of his people from their sin.

In the calendar of Israel there was one day which by reason of its importance was called the Great Day. It was the day on which the high-priest made atonement for his people. On that day was heard no sound of hammer or axe, no food could be prepared or eaten, no loud word might be spoken. The high-priest, arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, his hands filled with the blood of the sacrifice, in the presence of all the people who gazed with deepest interest, lifted the outer veil and passed into the tabernacle. No eye must gaze upon the mysteries there. He drew aside the curtain of the Holiest of All and bowed before the ark of the covenant, sprinkling its golden cover, the Mercy-seat, with the sacrificial blood. He made his prayer for the people and presently came forth again, and in token of the success of his mediatorial errand laid his hand upon the head of the scapegoat and sent it forth to Azazel, out into the wilderness, out into forgetfulness, laden with the people's sin.

So on this memorable day on Calvary our High-Priest passed into the Holiest of All, and darkness fell like a veil behind him. No human eye must gaze upon him while with bleeding hands he sprinkles the Mercy-seat for us. But presently when the darkness lifts, the fact will be disclosed that the redemptive work of Jesus has been finished and there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in him.

Two helpful thoughts let us carry with us; one as to the sinner's doom. It is said of Luther that, in reading of this strange darkness, he sat silent for a long while and then cried out, "The Son of God was God-forsaken!

Who can understand it?" We cannot, indeed, understand it unless we believe that Jesus, who knew no sin, was made sin for us; that he stood as our representative before the offended law; that he was made a curse for us and the world's sin was laid upon him. In the great confession of the universal church we say, "I believe that he descended into hell." If there was ever a moment of which we can truly say that, it was when he passed into the deep darkness and when that awful cry pierced the night, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was the doom of all sinners that he was bearing then. This was hell, the undying worm, the unquenchable fire; he bore it for us.

The other thought is of the sinner's deliverance. Often had the Jews demanded, "Show us a sign." At last, in this stupendous darkness, the sign was given. By this and by the returning of the light when Jesus had finished his work, let us believe that he was veritably the Son of God and able to save unto the uttermost all who will come unto God by him. It is because he pressed to his lips the purple cup of death that we shall drink of the river of life that floweth out from the throne of God. It is because he was bruised for our offences that we, believing in him, shall go scot free for ever; for by his stripes we are healed—blessed be his name!

At the ninth hour the light returned, the execution was over, the people went down to their homes in Jerusalem, turning ever and anon to mark the gloomy outline of the cross and its burden against the heavens, saying one to another, "The Nazarene is dead!" But oh, how little they knew what that meant—the Nazarene is dead! Through him life and immortality are brought to light. He conquered death.

“O Death, where is thy victory?  
O Grave, where is thy sting?”

“Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

We also come down from the hill Calvary to meet at this ninth hour, in the returning light, our common tasks, but with new hope. Let us go on with renewed courage, let us love him more, let us serve him better, let us walk with him to the crucifixion and triumph in the grace of his resurrection, until the day break, and the shadows flee away, and we stand in the light of his countenance for ever!

## WHAT CHRISTIANITY HAS DONE FOR THE WORKINGMAN.

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"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." EXOD. 20:2.

THE noblest of the Roman epics begins with the words, "*Arma virumque cano*;" on which Thomas Carlyle remarks, "The epic of our times is not 'Arms and the man' but 'Tools and the man I sing.'" The great problems are not being wrought out on the battlefield, but in the great centres of industry. The best men of to-day are the producers, such as by braincraft or handicraft add to the material possessions of the children of men.

At the time when our Lord Jesus came into the world there were three classes of people:

*First*, the Patricians, who lived in luxurious ease. Pliny says that he saw Lollia Paulina arrayed for a feast in finery that cost forty million sesterces or something more than two millions of our money. Sabina, the wife of Nero, took with her when journeying five hundred she-asses to furnish milk for her cosmetic baths. And these asses wore gold and silver shoes. It was not counted an extraordinary thing to spend the revenues of an entire province on a banquet in those days. The tables were furnished with the brains of peacocks and the tongues of nightingales and similar delicacies. Thus it will be seen that the Patricians rolled in wealth. But they were numerically an insignificant part of the population, for in



Rome there were only two thousand knights and senators in all.

*Second*, the Slaves. And these were the most abject class. They lived in *ergastula*, or slave stables, where they were oftentimes chained in their stalls. In old age they were exposed on an island in the Tiber. They had no rights which their superiors were bound to respect. Of these *les misérables* there were in the empire sixty millions.

*Third*, the Plebs Urbana, an idle, shiftless class. They formed the bulk of Roman citizenship—God save the mark! To their minds it was not respectable to work; that was the business of the slaves. The cry of the Plebs was ever “*Panem et circenses*,” bread and games! And there were three hundred and twenty thousand of these reputable citizens who received *congiaria*, or public corn rations. They spent their forenoons lounging about the forum and their afternoons at the amphitheatre. There were three hundred and eighty-five thousand seats in the circus. Here the gladiatorial contests took place, the *pompa diaboli*. The Emperor Trajan had eleven thousand wild beasts brought into the arena at one festival. While the Plebs sat witnessing these games, their patrons from above threw figs and fruits to them. At the conclusion of the games they went to their wretched homes, which, in respect to comfort, were incomparably beneath the tenement houses of these days. They were called *insulæ*, and there were forty-four thousand of them in the Imperial City. As a rule a Plebeian wore only a tunic, for he had but a single garment to his name; if fortunately he possessed a toga, he reserved it to be buried in.

Where then was the thrifty middle class, the class that constitutes the strength of our modern civilization? There

was none. All labor was remanded to the slaves. The Patricians and Plebeians lived alike in gentlemanly leisure.

Then came the Carpenter of Nazareth. He was distinctly a man of the people. We are accustomed to think of him as crowned with a halo of light. But there was no halo or other outward symbol to distinguish him from the great multitude of common men. He had something better. Deep down in his heart was the divine purpose to uplift the fallen and vindicate the rights of the oppressed. His great heart was in sympathy with the masses. He came as a knight-errant to exalt the lowly ones.

It is only nineteen hundred years since then; the ripening of that glorious purpose has been slow but sure. The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small. We look back now over the centuries and are able to estimate what Christ has done for the multitudes. It will be of interest to note what the influence of this Nazarene Carpenter and the religion which he instituted has been upon the welfare of the workingman.

I. To begin with, *He has levelled up the race*. The tendency of all other forces which have had to do with the labor problem and the great industrial questions of all the ages has been to level down. The cry is, "Down with the aristocracy, down with wealth and noble birth and culture!" But the gospel shibboleth is, "Up with the people!" It was the purpose of Christ to vindicate the importance of man as man. Adventitious conditions were nothing to him. He loved man as made in the likeness of God. And this thought of our universal birthright, be it observed, lies at the basis of the true philosophy of human rights. The Carpenter of Nazareth taught the solidarity of the race; one man is as good as another, because there is one God and Father of all. "I perceive,"

said Peter, "that God is no respecter of persons." Follow up that declaration and you come to Runnymede. In Magna Charta, that great instrument of human rights which was drawn up in the meadow at Runnymede, there is no mention of the people and no reference to labor save in the stipulation that a man might not be deprived of the implements of his trade. But if we follow up that manifesto still further, we shall come within sound of the bell in Independence Hall which rang out the proclamation that all men are created free and equal and with certain inalienable rights. Thus the philosophy of the Galilean Carpenter has been slowly but surely making its way among the nations. And man is coming to be more and more respected by reason of his manhood, his birthright as a child of God.

II. The gospel of Jesus Christ *has dignified labor*. And what other religion has done this? Plato, Cicero, and Lycurgus all held that it was a disgrace to touch the implements of common toil. It is a matter of immense import that Jesus himself was a workingman. It is worth asking whether we should not have made better progress in the propaganda of his gospel had we long ago abandoned the luminous halo, and crowned him simply with the square cap of a carpenter. He was indeed very God of very God; but, tabernacled in flesh, he was also very man of very man. And it is Jesus the carpenter who must win the masses. The twelve whom he gathered about him at the beginning of his ministry were all men of braincraft or handicraft. There was not among them a single gentleman of leisure. So in the early church the great multitude of believers were from among the working people. On the one hand not many mighty, not many noble, were called; and on the other, there was little in the new religion to attract the indolent, for this was

one of the early Christian precepts, "If any will not work, neither let him eat." The church ever since has been recruited from the same source. Luther was a miner's son; Zwingli was a shepherd lad; Cardinal Wolsey was the son of a butcher; John Bunyan was a tinker; William Carey a shoemaker; Jeremy Taylor a barber; Dr. Livingstone a weaver. Thus wherever the genius of Christ's gospel has prevailed, a special honor has been put upon the children of toil.

III. The religion of Christ has everywhere *bettered the material condition of the working classes*. The question of wages lies at the centre of the reconciliation of capital and labor. Our Lord said, "The laborer is worthy of his hire."

In fact the very thought of wages is peculiar to nations which have felt the influence of the Christian religion. No wages were paid in ancient Rome; the working class lived on charity. The despicable custom of giving a *douceur* to the waiters in our restaurants is a remnant of the ancient pagan world. The Pyramids were built by laborers who lived on onions and lentils doled out to them by their overseers. A *quid pro quo*, an honest wage for an honest day's work, was as yet undreamed of. But as time passed and the gospel began to take hold upon the universal heart and conscience, it was felt that the producer was worthy of something beyond a mere livelihood. The improvement in the condition of the toiling class was gradual but sure. Age-buttressed evils are not levelled in a day. As late as the thirteenth century a carpenter in England received but threepence per day. In the fourteenth century the hours of labor were from five in the morning until seven-thirty in the evening, and a workman was not permitted to change masters

without a six months' warning. In the time of Charles II. a weaver received sixpence for a day's work. But there is evidence of progress in the growing discontent. Macaulay speaks of a ballad circulated at that time in which the weavers deplore their sixpence and plead for a shilling a day. There has been magnificent progress since then. John Stuart Mill says that the laboring classes of our times receive more pay per annum than professional men, and there is no more self-respecting class than the hand-workers.

"The heart of the toiler has throbbings  
That stir not the bosoms of kings."

And this is the immediate result of Christian influence. Let the doubter consult a map of the world. Let him observe how China is a land of mandarins and coolies; how Egypt is a land of rich men and beggars; how Turkey is a land of pashas and slaves. In what nation outside of Christendom is labor regarded with honor or the laborer permitted to be a self-respecting man? If, on the other hand, we are reminded of the discontent which prevails among laboring people in Christian lands, of the strikes and processions of strikers marching through our streets with banners bearing the legends of their discontent, let it be remembered that these very expressions of desire to improve their condition are an evidence of the influence of the gospel. Who ever heard of a procession of discontented toilers marching through the streets of the Oriental cities? The right of complaint is one of the rights which Christianity has vindicated among men.

IV. The religion of Jesus Christ *makes it possible for the lower classes to rise*. There is an old proverb, *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*, Let the shoemaker stick to his last. But under the influence of the Nazarene Carpenter the



shoemaker is permitted to rise above his last. In pagan nations the various classes are required to keep their place. The Hindoos say that when Brahm created the race he made Brahmans from his head, the Kshatrya or soldiers from his breast, the Vaisya or merchant class from his loins, and the Sudras or laborers from his feet. And within these lines there are hundreds of divisional lines which have remained from time immemorial, which it is quite impossible to cross. This is so far true that the water-carriers and scavengers of Bombay are the children of those who were scavengers and water-carriers many hundreds of years ago. But in Christian countries a golden ladder is placed before the feet of every ambitious man and he is urged to mount it.

Men often lament the multiplication of millionaires in these days. It is indeed a most significant fact. A recent tabulated estimate shows that there are four thousand and forty millionaires in the United States, and of these one thousand and three reside in the city of New York. But is this cause of lamentation? No, rather shall we not rejoice in it? For who are these men who have accumulated such wealth? Nearly all of them have come up from the ranks—they were poor men or the children of poor men. The thing which has been done, may be done again. It is a glorious fact that no man, however humble, need despair of prosperity if he be thrifty and industrious. But let it be observed that this possibility is found only in countries under the benign influence of the religion of Christ.

What shall we then say to these things? The religion which has accomplished so much can be trusted to accomplish more. The rights of the toilers are safe in the hands of the Nazarene Carpenter. If Christianity cannot



bring about the adjustment of the relations between employer and employé, what force can do it?

A godless anarchy tried its hand upon the problem in the days of the Reign of Terror. It wrote upon the church doors and upon all the dead walls of Paris, everywhere, Liberty, Fraternity, Equality. It raved and fought, and with what result? To-day the French peasant still wears his smock-frock and wooden sabots.

Or is it likely that communism will bring about the consummation devoutly to be wished? Its achievements thus far encourage no hope. The workingman himself has no confidence in it.

“What is a communist? One who has yearnings  
For equal division of unequal earnings.  
Idler or bungler, he’s one who is willing  
To fork out his penny and pocket your shilling.”

“The “strike” has ever been a weapon of weakness. It rests on the sophism that two wrongs may make a right. The difficulty is one which cannot be adjusted by violent measures. Some thousands of years ago, in Egypt, a son of the Hebrews went out among his brethren who were toiling among the brick-kilns and looked upon their burdens. He saw them toiling hard and receiving no recompense, oppressed and beaten by their taskmasters. In sudden anger he drew his sword and wrought murder with it. By that deed the deliverance of Israel was delayed forty years. He was sent out into the wilderness of Midian to meditate in solitude upon his unwise precipitancy. To him, in fulness of time, the Lord said, “I have seen the affliction of my people and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, and I am come down to deliver them.” Then on a certain night the signal was given and they set forth. That was a magnifi-

cent "march out." And lo, yonder in the heavens the pillar of cloud went before them. The Almighty had taken matters into his own hands, as it is written, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Success is sure when God is with us.

It is helpful and stimulating to know that God, at this day, walks up and down among the children of men in the person of the Nazarene Carpenter. He has come into the world not merely to deliver men from spiritual and eternal death, but to lessen the pains and augment the pleasures of this present life.

Oh this is a glorious Christ, a glorious Bible, a glorious religion that touches our troubled lives at every point!

By the mediation of Jesus of Nazareth, the labor question and all the problems of humanity will be wisely adjusted. Adam Smith said, "A prudent self-interest is the sufficient basis of economic science." It would be wiser to say that self-sacrifice is the beginning and end of economic science. The settlement of this question, together with the adjustment of all the relations of human life, must be brought about by the operation of the divine principle which the Lord Jesus Christ set forth in the golden rule: "*Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*"

## SHALL WE KNOW EACH OTHER IN HEAVEN ?

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“ But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.” 1 Thess. 4:13.

THE poverty of our Western farmers is largely due to the fact that while they multiply their acres they content themselves with tilling a small portion for present use. We keep ourselves poor, spiritually, for a like reason. As God's children and co-heirs with his only-begotten Son we have a vast inheritance. In all directions it stretches out of sight. But alas, we put under tillage an infinitesimal part of it, only so much of it as lies immediately around our present homes and their belongings. Oh for a view from Nebo's summit! Oh for a clear apprehension, not only of the privilege of holy living here, but of those unspeakable things which God hath reserved for them that love him!

One of the charms of Holy Scripture is that, taking for granted the existence of a brighter and better world, it relieves the uncertainty respecting it with a twilight glow of vision and prophecy, and stimulates in us a longing, like that of Israel, to go over and possess the land. A glorious land indeed, and among its attractions there is none that affects us more profoundly than the anticipation of meeting and recognizing those whom we have

loved and lost. We cherish the thought as a fond dream, but how certainly may we depend upon it? How much of evidence is there to sustain it? Let us now call up the witnesses for the renewing and the strengthening of our faith.

I. Our first witness is *The Heart*. The heart of this man or of that man in matters pertaining to the spiritual life may throb uncertainly, but the heart of the race beats true. Man was made in God's likeness, and there is a deep longing in his nature for a return to God. It is like the voice of the sea-shell murmuring of the sea.

All races and generations have held this doctrine of recognition in the better life. The Greeks believed it. Socrates, with the poisoned cup at his lips, thus discourses: "If the common expression be true that death conveys us to the place of departed men, with delight I drink this hemlock, for it sends my spirit to commune with Ajax and Palamides." The Romans believed it. The hero of the *Æneid* going out into the unseen world was greeted by his former friends:

"The gladsome ghosts in circling troops attend  
And with unwearied eyes behold their friend."

The Egyptians believed it, else why did they fill their dead children's hands with toys and trinkets? and why did they inscribe upon the byssus bands the hope of an awakening on the morrow? The Hindoos believe it. In the institution of the *suttee*, as the widow ascends the funeral pyre she unbinds her hair and makes her last invocation to Brahm: "Oh that I might enjoy with my husband as many joyful years in the better world as there are hairs in these flowing braids."

Our own transcendental poets betray their belief in it:

"Somewhere in desolate, wind-swept space,  
 In twilight land, in No-man's Land,  
 Two hurrying shapes met face to face  
 And bade each other stand.  
 And 'Who are you?' cried one, agape,  
 Shuddering in the gloaming light.  
 'I do not know,' said the second shape ;  
 'I only died last night.'"

Thus, when we find the pulse of the race it testifies to the home-bringing. The heart will brook no denial. It insists that we shall know each other in the better life.

II. Our next witness is *Reason*. And here we stand beyond the region of mere sentiment. Reason counsels us to receive any doctrine which commends itself to our best judgment; let us therefore find the intellectual consensus. Here are four links which weld themselves into an irrefutable demonstration :

(1.) Immortality. It would be a superserviceable task to undertake here a proof of immortality. We receive it as an intuition. It is one of those universal truths which assert themselves as axioms, being interwoven with the mental constitution of the race. Do you ask, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Listen! Your whole being calls back, "I shall live and not die." We therefore take the truth of immortality as a postulate, a starting-point, from which we pass on to yet more glorious truths.

(2.) Identity. This follows immortality as a necessary sequence. The *Ego* or self-conscious personality is not impaired by death. What is death? "A covered bridge leading from light to light through a brief darkness." It is a mighty arch with brazen gates sprung over the pathway of our life. As one draws nigh, the gates roll back on creaking hinges, and then, the momentary anguish over, are closed again. The friends stand weeping

here and vainly gazing. One has passed through and continues his journey in the brighter, better life. His identity is unchanged. No doubt you and I will be amazed in the moment after our translation to find how like we are to what we were; there will be scarcely a break in consciousness. We shall not sink our personalities. No Nirvana awaits us, no sinking in the pantheistic soul, as a drop of water is lost in the unfathomable sea. We shall live right on.

(3.) Memory. There is no Lethe between this world and the hereafter. There can be none, else our identity would cease, for memory is the nexus binding the here with the hereafter. We shall doubtless walk together in the green pastures of Canaan and review the joys and sorrows of our earthly life. A Danish poet tells of a glorified spirit who was sent to bring the soul of a little girl to heaven. While winging his way with his precious charge, the child saw a rose-tree in his hand and asked the meaning of it. The angel replied that once upon a time there was a poor lad in the city they had left who lay for a long while dying. That rose-tree was the one solace of his loneliness; it filled the sick chamber with its fragrance and spoke of the coming spring. And now, at his desire, the flower was to be transplanted to Paradise. Then the child looked up into the angel's face and asked,

“ ‘How knowest thou this, bright power?’

Then splendidly he smiled :

‘Should I not know my flower?

I was that sickly child.’”

Ay, we shall remember there. The old home, the tree by the doorway, the well-sweep, the path leading through the meadow, the far-away sound of the school-bell—we



remember them here, and in glory they will still abide with us.

(4.) Recognition. This completes the four-linked chain of evidence—immortality, identity, memory, recognition. The first involves the last. If there is to be a heaven at all, we shall certainly know each other there.

At a country fair in New England the militia had come from many surrounding towns and the parade was to be led by old-time musicians. A gray-haired drummer had taken his place and a decrepit fifer beside him, veterans of the war of 1812, but quite unknown to each other. They led the march with the martial tunes of long ago. At last the fifer struck up a tune wherein his comrade did not follow him. The fire kindled in the drummer's eyes and for a moment he held his drumsticks motionless. Then approaching the fifer he pushed back the cap from his gray hair and with flashing eyes cried, "John, ye've played that before; ye played it at Lundy's Lane! I mind ye. I played the drum beside ye that day. Man, where have ye been, where have ye been?" Ah, there will be times in heaven when we, walking in the golden streets, shall hear the sound of familiar voices or a strain of music or shall catch glimpses of faces that were familiar long ago. And there will be greetings and hand-clasps and the past will live again.

III. We turn now to the court of last appeal, the *Holy Scriptures*. For when the heart and reason have borne their utmost testimony it yet remains for us to make sure, doubly sure, by turning to the oracles of God. The truth of the whole Scriptures, so far as they have reference to the eternal life, is hypothecated upon the fact of immortality with all its logical sequences. This recognition of the saints would stand in Scripture even if there were no

"thus saith the Lord." But the direct testimony is plain and clear.

(1.) This truth is implied in all passages that refer to *heaven as a home*, the Father's house with many mansions, the household of the people of God. What makes a home? Four walls and a roof? Tapestries and pictures? Nay! the presence of our dear ones. What sort of a heaven would that be where the members of the family would not know each other? A devout man, on being asked if he expected to know his favorite sister in the after-world, said that he expected to be so continually occupied with the beauty of the Bright and Morning Star that she might remain for ages at his side and he not notice her. In that reply there was a vast amount of pious ignorance. Is there any incompatibility between our love for the great Father and our love for our own dear ones? Is there any incongruity between the first and second of the great commandments? A man may love the Lord with all his soul and yet love his human friends with a pure heart, fervently. Nay, more, the love of God is perfected in us only when we thus love one another. Our kinships and our friendships are as eternal as the Father's love.

(2.) This truth is furthermore implied in all passages which speak of the dead as *having rejoined the saints triumphant*, as where Abraham and others of the patriarchs are said to have been "gathered unto their fathers" or "gathered unto their people." Some have supposed this to mean that they were buried, so to speak, in the family burying-ground. This, however, was not the case with Abraham, whose body slept in an isolated grave, or of Moses, who slept in the mountain, and of whom it is written, "No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

All such statements must have reference not to the body but to the soul, and they point to the reunion of the saints.

(3.) In passages which speak of heaven *as a feast*. Did you ever sit at table with a company when you were acquainted with only your host, and if so, was it not a chilly experience? And shall we so look forward to the marriage feast whereat we are to celebrate the nuptials of the King's Son? Of that festive occasion the Lord said, "They shall come from the east and the west and the north and the south and sit down with Abraham and Isaac in the kingdom." If the inhabitants are to know those ancient worthies why shall they not also recognize others who are nearer and dearer than they?

(4.) In all passages respecting *the judgment*. We are to be called to account at the great day for all sins done in the body. But it is manifestly needful, in the administration of justice, that the culprit shall know himself to be the evil-doer. We can neither be justly punished nor rewarded unless we can look back upon our good or evil deeds. In the Tichborne trial it was the question of identity that determined whether the claimant should have an inheritance or a term in prison. So the thought of judgment loses all its significance if our personal identity and memory of the past be eliminated from it.

(5.) In the story of *David's bereavement*. How simple and touching are the words! "Is the child dead?" he said to his servants. And they answered, "He is dead." Then David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his apparel and came into the house of the Lord and worshipped: then he came to his own house, and he required and they set bread before him, and he did eat. Then said his servants unto him, "What thing is this that thou hast done? Thou didst fast

and weep for the child while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread." And he said, "While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept, for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*"

(6.) In the account of the *transfiguration of our Lord*. Here were two persons who had lived in centuries far apart and who had been more than a thousand years in glory, represented not only as knowing each other, but as having a deep and practical interest in the affairs of the living, for they spake of the decease which Jesus was to accomplish at Jerusalem.

(7.) In the parable of *Dives and Lazarus*. The rich man is represented here as knowing afar off the beggar who formerly lay at his gate and as understanding the condition of his brethren who were still living on earth.

(8.) *In our text*: "Brethren, I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." Paul is writing to the Christians in Thessalonica among whom he had labored and whom he regarded as his joy and crown at the coming of Christ. He now comforts them respecting the welfare of their friends, many of whom had for the truth's sake been burned, beheaded, sawn asunder, or slain by lions. He would not have them sorrow for these loved ones "even as others which have no hope," for Christ in his gospel had brought life and immortality to light and had opened the doors of the Father's house and given them a hope that maketh not ashamed. He assures them that the time is drawing near when all shall be transported to the better life. Those who may be still living

at the Lord's coming shall be caught up together with their loved ones in the clouds, to meet him, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Thus the hope of reunion rests upon the sure testimony of the divine Word; herein let us comfort one another.

“As for thy friends, they are not lost :  
The several vessels of thy fleet,  
Though parted now, by tempests tossed,  
Shall safely in the haven meet.”

I speak to bereaved husbands and wives, some of whom have longed these many years to look into the dear absent eyes; ye do not sorrow as those who are without hope. Great was the joy of the espousal; the joy of the reunion shall be greater.

I speak to motherless children who feel the lingering touch of mother's arms, who find themselves, even after the lapse of many years, recalling the dear vanished face. Oh for a word from mother's lips! It shall be, bless God! We sorrow not as do those who are without hope.

I speak to parents who have given their children back to God. How dark were the wings of the death angel! But Israfel will make all right. It was a blessed thing that happened under the archway at the village of Nain. A mother was walking behind the bier whereon lay the body of her child. She was a widow, and he her only son. Nearing the gate came another procession, Jesus and his small retinue of followers. They met beneath the gate, those two, life and death. And it is written, “Jesus had compassion on her.” Oh blessed, pitying heart! And he laid his hand upon the bier and said, “Arise,” and the lad arose and sat up. And what then? He “gave him unto his mother.” In this let us behold a foregleam of

the joy which awaits us in the better life. Oh golden day of days when the Lord shall put back the children in their mothers' arms! Verily, verily we do not sorrow as those who have no hope. We pass within the shadow, but above its gloom is the overarching promise of the glorious future. We shall meet again, blessed be God!



## WE BEHELD HIS GLORY.

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“And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14.

ST. JOHN was the apostle of the glory of Christ. He saw it more clearly than others, doubtless because as the beloved disciple he entered into the secret place of his Lord's confidence. The heart has perceptions to which the mind is oftentimes a stranger. The Virgin Mother, also, knew that her son Jesus was more than an ordinary man; this was the secret which as a fond mother she “kept in her heart.” But she was slow to perceive the full meaning of it. Not one of the disciples seemed fully to believe on him. It was not until the last journey down through Cæsarea Philippi that Peter, foremost always, was moved to utter the good confession, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!” But the great truth came ultimately to them all. Then even doubting Thomas, in the presence of his risen Master, was constrained to cry, “My Lord and my God!”

To see the divine glory has ever been the yearning desire of earnest men. It is not possible. Can the naked eye gaze at the noonday sun? Can a child hold the ocean in the hollow of its hand? Can the finite form a conception of the infinite? Yet this vain longing is proof of our divine lineage. So Moses entreated, “Show me thy glory!” And God answered, “Hide thyself in the cleft of the rock yonder and I will pass by.” He hid himself and waited, but all that he heard was the rustle of a

garment, all that he saw was a vanishing robe. No man has ever seen God and lived.

It was, however, to meet this fervent desire of the human heart that God condescended to give a visible token of his real presence. It was the Shechinah, the luminous cloud that hovered over the tabernacle and which as pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night led the children of Israel through the wilderness to the land which flowed with milk and honey. It rose ever between the wings of the angels over the Ark of the Covenant, shadowing the mercy-seat where Jehovah had promised to meet his people and commune with them. The Shechinah was no longer needed when the only-begotten Son of the Father became flesh and dwelt among us. He was its anti-type, its glorious fulfilment. Great is the mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh; the angels desire to look into it.

We have neither the Shechinah nor the Incarnate One, we know Christ no more after the flesh, yet his glory lingers. Is it not strange that of all the procession of the mighties who have passed by, not one has wholly escaped the twilight of oblivion save this Carpenter of Nazareth? Kings and potentates, sages and philosophers, Cæsars and Alexanders and Napoleons—their greatness has vanished like the unsubstantial fabric of a dream. Of them was it written, "The path of glory leads but to the grave." But not so of this Nazarene Carpenter; his name has grown brighter with each succeeding age and shall until every knee shall bow at the mention of it.

"No mortal can with him compare  
Among the sons of men;  
Fairer is he than all the fair  
That fill the heavenly train."

The apostle said, "We beheld his glory." We also, good friends, have seen it, the glory of Jesus of Nazareth, waxing like a crescent from the beginning until now. What was the glory that John saw? What is the glory that gives an unchallenged preëminence to the Carpenter of Nazareth over all the earth to-day?

I. It was not *the glory of an illustrious birth*. No bells were rung when Prince Immanuel came. He was of humble parentage, a child of the people. His boyhood was passed in an obscure village in a remote corner of the earth. He learned the trade of a carpenter and at eventide wiped the sweat of honest toil from his brow. There was no halo around his head nor any outward token of glory beyond that of other men.

II. Nor was it *the glory of any natural endowment* such as extraordinary wisdom. He was indeed possessed of that. The great themes which reach out into eternity—God, immortality, judgment, heaven, hell—themes which the sages and philosophers had avoided or treated with the utmost diffidence, he boldly confronted—he, an untutored handworker. And when he touched these problems he solved them. His teaching was characterized by the utmost simplicity. There is much turgid prolixity in the philosophical discussions of our time. Goldsmith said to Dr. Johnson, "You make your little fishes talk like whales." This is our fault, and men foster it by their foolish fondness for a seeming profundity which is mere *bathos*. This Jesus used no sesquipedalian words. He set forth the sublimities in terms so plain that a wayfaring man, however foolish, need not err in them. And he spake with the might and power of an original authority; not like the scribes, who were mere empyrics, but like one who had dwelt in the midst of those glorious re-

alities of which he testified from personal knowledge. His word was, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." He waved aside the wisdom of all the rabbis who had gone before him. "Ye have heard how it was said by them of olden time" thus and so, "but *I* say unto you." *I!* Who is this that speaks in such presumptuous terms? The Carpenter of Nazareth. Yet his words have outlived all the wisdom of the wise, and now, nineteen hundred years having passed, they wield the commanding influence among men and nations. As a teacher of divine truth this man from the carpenter shop of Nazareth stands solitary and alone. The world assents to the judgment of the officers sent by the Sanhedrin to arrest him, "Never man spake like this man."

Nevertheless this was not the glory which John saw, nor can it account for his preëminent place in history until this day.

III. Nor was it *the glory of power*. He was indeed possessed of power beyond all other men, insomuch that he said, "All power is given unto me."

He had an absolute command of nature. Xerxes scourged the stormy waves and they roared back defiant laughter. Jesus said, "Peace, be still!" and like naughty children they sobbed themselves to sleep before him. At his reproachful word the fig-tree withered; in his hands the loaves were multiplied that the hungry might be fed. He went down to the marriage at Cana:

"The conscious water, touched by grace divine,  
Confessed its Lord and blushed itself to wine."

Not less absolute was his authority over men. To the fishermen by the lakeside, to the tax-gatherer at the receipt of customs, he said, "Follow me!" and as if moved by some mesmeric or hypnotic influence they straightway

arose and followed him. And multitudes have been doing it ever since. He spoke of the heavenly grace in hearing of the Magdalene, and she, her garments bedraggled in vice and her heart filled with unutterable shame, came and wept before him. He spoke to the children, and they came clambering upon his knees; he spoke to the unclean spirits who had taken possession of the demoniac, and lo! he sat at the Lord's feet clothed and in his right mind. He called aloud at the grave's mouth, "Come forth!" and the sheeted dead arose to newness of life.

In all these visible tokens of the mightiness of Jesus we are impressed with the thought of reserve power. His miracles told not so much of what he did as of what he might do. There was the hiding of strength. When they came with lanterns and staves and spears to Gethsemane he said, "Whom seek ye?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." And at his words, "I am he!" they went backward and fell to the ground. Was this because there was for a moment a breaking forth of his secret power? Had they touched the live wire of Omnipotence? In any case, such a manifestation befitted him who made the supreme claim, "All power is given unto me."

Nevertheless this was not the glory of which John spoke, nor is it the memory of this manifestation of power that gives to Jesus his conspicuous place as the greatest of earth's mighties.

IV. Was it *his extraordinary goodness*? Here indeed he stood solitary and alone. He was not conscious of sin. No confession of sin ever fell from his lips. Adam hid himself among the trees of the garden because he was ashamed. David cried, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the

multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me." Isaiah exclaimed, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips!" Paul was overwhelmed with contrition: "Oh wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death!" But Jesus sent forth this challenge, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

If a single flaw had been found in his life and character, if the search-light of criticism through these centuries had been able to detect so much even as a suggestion of a single sin or ill-considered word or selfish deed, the whole fabric of the Christian faith would have fallen asunder, for it rests upon the absolute perfectness of the character of this Jesus. But the world unites in the confession made by the centurion who had charge of his crucifixion, "Verily, this was a righteous man."

Nor was this merely negative goodness. All the positive graces of character were bound together in him. Name any attribute of a noble life, and lo! he had it in perfection. He was *par excellence* the Son of man, i. e., the ideal of manhood. His biography was written in eloquent words, "He went about doing good." He showed forth kindness towards all, his friends and his enemies, drabs, thieves, lepers, God's poor and the devil's poor—to all alike and impartially. He deserved the tribute which Renan, his infidel biographer, has paid to him: "Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages



will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus."

But the glory which the apostle saw in Him and the glory which all believers have seen in Him since the beginning of the Christian era was something more than this, something more than adventitious greatness which natural or supernatural powers and grace could confer upon him.

V. We beheld *His glory as of the only-begotten of the Father*. He had nothing less than the glory of Godhood. He was the only-begotten of the Father. His glory was like that of the Shechinah, at once the shining forth and the adumbration of deity. He was God manifest in flesh. To attribute to Jesus all the foregoing tokens of greatness while denying him this divineness, this glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, is to fall infinitely short of the truth.

He claimed to be very God of very God. His claim was verified at his birth by the singing of the angels; at his baptism by the voice from heaven; at his transfiguration by the enfolding cloud which was again the Shechinah, the excellent glory, and the voice saying, "This is my beloved Son;" at his death by the shrouding of the heavens and the rocking of the earth; at his resurrection by the breaking of the bands of death when he took captivity captive; at his ascension when he arose with uplifted hands and vanished from sight leaving his benediction upon the world; at Pentecost when there came a baptism of fire and of power because Jesus had breathed upon his disciples; and all along history by innumerable miracles of grace, for he still walks up and down our thoroughfares opening blind eyes, wiping away the scales of leprosy, dispossessing those who have been demented

by unclean spirits, and raising the dead. This is the glory of Jesus of Nazareth, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.

VI. But why *this shining forth of glory*? It is surely not for the mere gratification of the curious? At this point we come upon two significant words, *grace* and *truth*. This only-begotten of the Father was full of grace and truth.

His coming to the earth was to show the grace of God to usward. He brought the message, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." As the Shechinah led the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of their bondage, so did this living anti-type of the Shechinah, the only-begotten of the Father, come to deliver our ruined race from the bondage of spiritual and eternal death.

The word *truth*, here, characterizes our Lord's devotion to this work. *Aletheia* is a large word; it means more than veracity. It means *loyalty* to a noble purpose. It means an unswerving devotion to a supreme object of life. So we say of a man, sometimes, he is true as steel, he is true as the needle to the pole. So true was Jesus to his errand of grace. He never forgot it, he never swerved from it. Perhaps he might have chosen an easier path, but in that he would not have been a true man. He set his face steadfastly towards the cross. He never flinched. In the beginning he offered himself to bring a message of amnesty to the world. As he set forth he caught up the hand-writing of ordinances which was against us, the decree, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." It was his purpose to erase that decree with blood and nail it to his cross. For thirty weary years he was ever

mindful of his mission. With that grim death-sentence in his hand he ran the gauntlet of men and devils. They reviled him and spit upon him—on he ran; they scourged him, they loaded him with shame and obloquy—on he ran, until he reached the hilltop outside the walls of the Holy City, and there, while they nailed him to the cross, he delivered his message of grace; while his enemies seemed to be nailing him to the accursed tree he was blotting out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us with his own precious blood and nailing it to his cross. (Col. 2: 14.)

His work was done, his glory—the glory of the only-begotten of the Father—was perfected in this message of grace. And then the heavens opened. A retinue of angels met him and bore him back to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. “Lift up your heads, O ye gates,” they cried, “and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and let the King of Glory enter in.” He was dead, but liveth and is alive for evermore, and ever maketh intercession for us.

“The head that once was crowned with thorns  
Is crowned with glory now.”

And meanwhile, here on earth, his name grows brighter with every passing year. The story of his work in our behalf is finding its way to the hearts of the children of men. Wherefore God hath given him the NAME which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2: 10.)

## JUDAS ISCARIOT; OR THE FLOWER, FRUIT, AND ASHES OF SIN.

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"And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him." Mark 3:19.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." James 1:13-15.

WHAT'S in a name? Much every way. An army of lads have been called "John" and "Peter" and "James," but was ever a lad named for Judas Iscariot? The world abhors the memory of that man. And rightly so. As friendship is the most genial, gratitude the most humane, and loyalty the most heroic of the graces, so is treachery the basest and meanest of crimes. In the three lists of the disciples this Judas is always mentioned with the stigma, "which also betrayed him." He has come down through the centuries bearing that scarlet letter on his breast.

His biography is the story of the evolution of death. Yet he was once an infant in a fond mother's arms. He played with other boys in the streets of Kerioth and his laughter was as innocent and merry as theirs. He dreamed the dreams and saw the visions which are common to those who stand on the verge of young manhood. Then into that life came the figure of Jesus. The word was spoken, "Follow me." A man whom Jesus thus meets is never quite the same after it. This is the pivotal episode

in every life. The issues of eternity are involved in it. This man of Kerioth heeded the voice of Jesus and rose up and followed him.

We mark from this time onward three stages in the development of evil. They are given by the apostle James in these words, "And lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." There is a tree in the Orient which bears a crimson blossom before putting forth foliage—a flower so deadly that the bees in search of sweetness, dipping into it, fall dead. The fruit of this tree is a gall-apple which at ripeness is filled with a bitter dust. It is appropriately called the Judas tree, and it is an apologue of the self-propagating power of evil—the blossom, the fruit, and the ashes of it.

I. *The blossom of the Judas tree is lust.* The word has an uncanny sound. In Scripture, however, its reference is usually to inordinate desire of any sort.

(1.) Avarice, or the inordinate desire for money. It is written of Judas that "he bare the bag." There is no reason to say that money of itself is other than good. But the love of it is a root of all evil.

"Gold! gold! gold! gold!  
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,  
Molten, graven, hammered, and rolled;  
Heavy to get and light to hold;  
Hoarded, bartered, bought, and sold,  
Stolen, borrowed, squandered, doled:  
Spurned by the young, but hugged by the old  
To the very verge of the church-yard mould;  
Price of many a crime untold:  
Gold! gold! gold! gold!  
Good or bad a thousand-fold!  
How widely its agencies vary,

To save, to ruin, to curse, to bless,  
As even its minted coins express,  
Now stamped with the image of good Queen Bess,  
And now of a Bloody Mary."

Whether our money—much or little—shall prove a blessing or a curse, depends on our way of regarding and of using it. Money will kindle a fire to warm the blue hands of poverty or to burn up truth, virtue, love, and all the noblest passions of the heart. Money will provide bread for the widow and the fatherless, or glut the soul and body with brutish vices. Money, if rightly used, will make the wildernesses of this world to blossom like the rose; or, if wrongly used, will scorch the greenest meadows and exile their possessors to Azazel for ever. "How widely its agencies vary!" Take heed and beware how you covet it; take heed and beware how you use it.

(2.) Sensuality, or the inordinate desire of pleasure. The sensual man is one who lives under the domination of his senses. His noblest pursuit is self-gratification. The end of that man is disappointment and shame. The Greeks had a temple of pleasure which was entered by a magnificent doorway where lights gleamed and minstrels played and sang. From within came sounds of music and of dancing. But at the rear of this temple was a wicket gate opening into a swine-yard. The end of pleasure-seeking is not satisfaction but satiety. The bacchanal is thrust forth, stripped and despoiled, into shame and contempt. His substance wasted, he sits in the swine-field alone with his shame and poverty.

(3.) Ambition, or the overweening love of earthly honor. This is the weakness of the noblest minds. No passion is so insatiable; death only ends it. Do you remember the dream of Alexander the Great at the door-



way of paradise? There he besought a blessing. The warder gave him a concave disk of bone, an empty eye-socket, saying, "This hath passion infinite, but a little dust will cover it. Control thyself, O king!" He went his way and placed the hollow disk in a scale. Vainly he sought to weigh it down with gold, more gold, and still more gold. He threw in precious stones and jewels, urns and chalices—in vain! threw in his purple robes, his crown, but still in vain. Then he bethought himself of the word, "a little dust will cover it." A handful of dust was thrown into the scale and the eye-socket went up like a feather. The lesson is that the paths of glory lead but to the grave. All desire of sordid gain ends at the border-line of eternity. A handful of graveyard mould will cover it.

II. *The fruit of the Judas tree is sin.* Lust, when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin.

The taste of the sacramental wine and bread was on the lips of the man of Kerioth when he went out of the upper chamber and betook himself to the Hall of Caiaphas. There he bargained with the rulers to betray his Lord for thirty pieces of silver. They were eager to receive him. This was the very chance for which they had waited long.

"When," they asked him, "wilt thou deliver him into our hands?"

"This very night."

"And where?"

"He is on his way, at this moment, to the garden of the oil-press, on the slope of Olivet. I know the place well. He is accustomed to resort thither for meditation and prayer. I will lead you."

They set forth, guards, rabbis, and a mob with swords

and staves and lanterns. The traitor was in front. He led them at a quick pace down the path to the Kedron and up along the slope of the opposite hill. They entered the gate of the garden. There Judas turned and said, "Whomsoever I shall kiss, the same is he; hold him fast." And so they passed on until they came to the grove of the oil-press. In the dim light of the moon they saw him yonder, and Judas, rushing headlong to his ruin, drew near and threw his arms about him. "Hail, Master!" he cried, and kissed him. The word here used is that of a lover and a maid—he kissed him eagerly, again and again. In that kiss his crime reached its consummation. It marked a sin against light, a sin against warning. It was treachery, it was *lèse majesté*, it was guilt of the deepest, darkest dye.

Let us not mistake, however, in thinking of this as an isolated crime. It was indeed a unique opportunity which came to Judas Iscariot thus to betray the innocent Son of God. In that he stands alone, yet all sin has in it the essence of treachery against Christ. So the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of certain ones who by persistence in evil-doing "crucify the Lord afresh and put him to an open shame."

"Alas for me, the guilt is mine  
Whene'er against thy will benign  
My treacherous heart hath stood;  
Mine are the lips that have betrayed,  
Mine is the debt which must be paid  
With groans and tears and blood."

III. *The ashes of the Judas tree are death.* This is the gall-apple. Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. The sentence of the traitor is recorded in the words, "It were better for him had he never been born."

Once only has that inscription been put upon the tomb of a human being. In other similar cases the veil of the awful future is not lifted. Of this traitor it is said, "He went unto his own place."

In the brief portion of his life that followed his ultimate resolution to betray Jesus we catch three glimpses of his face: *once* when he hurried from the upper chamber "and it was night." In the Wiertz gallery at Brussels there is a picture of this man wandering about on that dreadful night. He has come upon a group of workmen who, wearied by their labors, have fallen asleep. The light of the moon falls upon their quiet faces. The features of Judas are distorted with evil passion. He catches sight of the cross lying on the ground, the carpenters' tools beside them. He clutches his money-bag and hurries on.

*Again*, at the doorway to the Hall Gazith where the rabbis are in session. He may not enter. He pauses at the doorway for a moment, his face haggard and convulsed with an unspeakable despair. With the cry, "I have betrayed innocent blood!" he hurls the thirty pieces of silver down upon the marble floor. His heart and conscience are on fire. He hurries out again into the night.

*Once more*, at the field Aceldama; the body of the traitor hangs from the bough of a tree over the deep abyss of Hinnom. We may not linger for a moment here. Sin, when it is finished, bringing forth death. The owls in the clefts are hooting, "Fool, fool, that he did not know it!" The weird winds are moaning through the boughs, "O fool, not to have known that the wages of sin is death!"

Two words, by way of application. One is a word of warning. Let him who would avoid the mortal sin take heed and beware of the beginnings of it. When Pompey

could not prevail upon a certain city to billet his army he besought the people to let in a poor maimed soldier for the night. That night the maimed soldier opened the gates and admitted the army. An illicit desire has in it the promise and potency of mortal sin.

The other word is one of glorious hope and promise. We have reason to believe that if Judas Iscariot, at any moment before his death, had sought God's mercy he would have found it.

"Betwixt the saddle and the ground  
Mercy sought is mercy found."

Not even the sin of Judas was beyond pardon. God is a great Forgiver, willing to forgive unto the uttermost all who come unto him. In this life it is never too late to mend. As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that all should turn and live. Turn ye! turn ye! for why will ye die?

If mere sorrow for ill-doing could give assurance of absolution, we might believe that even Judas had it. But his regret appears to have been for the consequences of his guilt and not for his guilt itself as an offence against a holy God. The sin of Peter in denying Jesus was in many points akin with that of the wretched traitor. He also was overwhelmed with remorse, insomuch that he went out and wept bitterly. But his tears were mingled with faith. He so believed in the pardoning grace of Jesus that he could not be driven to despair. He sought the presence of his Lord and cried in deepest contrition, "Thou knowest that I love thee!" The old monk Staupitz said to Luther, overwhelmed with shame, "The true repentance is that which drives the soul to God."

No matter, friend, how heavy the burden of guilt that

weighs upon thee, God is a great Forgiver. "Come now," he saith, "and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be whiter than snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." He waits to be gracious. He waits to see thee sobbing at his feet that he may speak the word of pardon, "Son! daughter! thy sins be forgiven thee!"

## AHAB'S HARNESS.

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"And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the King of Israel between the joints of the harness; wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded." 1 KINGS 22:34.

THERE is something good in every man. It is written of Ahab, the son of Omri, that "he did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him." And yet he was a splendid man in many ways—not without noble impulses, bold to the verge of desperation, and enterprising in matters pertaining to the public prosperity. It is not surprising that despite his conspicuous weaknesses and the divine chastisement upon them, the kingdom flourished under his administration. He had one fault which was the bitter fountain of all his woes, namely, he had no religion. There were splendid possibilities of influence and usefulness in this man which were never realized because of his lack of moral conviction. So when he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Eth-Baal, and when she proposed to introduce the worship of her pagan gods, he did not oppose her wishes. The new Court Establishment was introduced with great pomp and circumstance. The king was quite willing to farm out all religious matters to his wife, who was ever his evil genius.

When the Syrian king challenged him to conflict at Ramoth-Gilead he gave no thought to the God of Israel, but, buckling on his harness, set forth. But for the flaws in his armor all might have gone well. In vain did the Syrians search the ranks of Israel for the commanding



figure of the king. But alas, an arrow shot at a venture found him. "Carry me out of the battle," he cried, "for I am wounded!" The shaft was withdrawn, but the harm was done. He died at the going down of the sun.

We observe in Ahab a type of character. There are men of generous native endowment and liberal culture, of magnanimous impulse and high ambition, who but for their lack of religion would make a glorious success of life. Their reliance is upon their high sense of honor. They run well so long as there is nothing to hinder them. They are beloved by their friends and respected by all who know them.

We are at this time passing through a period of financial depression. There is trouble in Wall Street, and Wall Street, the palpitating heart of American financial life, makes its trouble felt in every city in the land. Banks are closing, great corporations are going down under sudden stress. The loss of wealth is not so deplorable, were it not attended by so immense a loss of character. We hear on every hand of thefts, embezzlements and doubtful transactions, and of trusts betrayed. Men who have mingled in the busy throng for half a century, with never a stain upon their reputation, are hiding themselves for shame. As their troubles multiplied upon them they were unable to resist temptation to evil. One stroke of the pen, perhaps, might save them. It was done. The arrow thus found the joint in their harness. Scores of men, hitherto panoplied in pride of honor, are worse than dead at the going down of the sun.

It is a serious thing to live, for life is conflict. It is well that we should understand this. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,

against wickedness in high places. The world, the flesh, and the devil are arrayed against us—the busy, sordid world, hurrying us away from the consideration of eternal things; the flesh, ourselves, our own baser natures; and the devil, a personal deceiver, against whom there is no resistance possible save in the power of the living God. It is then a grievous mistake to suppose that we can get on without religion. No man can safely lean upon his own strength. The sense of manly honor is but a feeble reed which breaks under the weight of trial and sorrow and pierces through the hand. The armor of the unreligious man is sure to fail him.

I. There is a flaw in the *breast-plate*; the breast-plate covers the *heart*, and the heart is the centre of life. At this point *religion* is a sure defence. It sets the heart right by cleansing it of sin, and it covers it as with an impenetrable mail. No arrow can enter there.

II. There is defect in the *helmet*; the helmet covers the *brain*, the seat of the mind. The mind sympathizes with the heart. Affections and beliefs go together. The natural man receiveth not the things of God, neither can he, for spiritual things are spiritually discerned.

Philosophy is aptly defined as a knowledge of the just relations of things. The natural man has no true conception of his relation to God. He magnifies himself and minimizes Jehovah. His eyes are high and his eyelids lifted up. If he could catch but a glimpse of God he would cry like Isaiah of old, "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips and mine eyes have seen the King!"

The natural man knows not the relative importance of character and reputation. He puts the emphasis on the outward moralities. "What more is required," he says, "than to be true and honest and pay one's debts, obey

the law, and deal fairly with one's fellow-men?" This is morality as the world reckons it—the morality which makes reputation. But back of reputation, deep grounded in a spiritual conception of spiritual truth, lies character. The watchword of true manhood is, "To be, not seem to be."

The natural man discerns not the just ratio of time to eternity. He lives in the small circle of this present life. But if we are immortal, then time is only as the flight of the eagle overhead, while eternity stretches out like the boundless sea. Life here is a handbreadth; life yonder is endless as the lifetime of God. This and kindred truths lie beyond the ken of the unreligious. They receive them not, neither indeed can they, for their minds are not illumined by the Spirit, and the chance arrow enters the weak helmet.

III. An open *visor*. The visor covers the *eyes*. As the eyes are to the natural body, directing one's steps, so is *conscience* to the soul. But conscience again sympathizes with heart and mind. If the affections are wrong, if there is no right understanding of moral truth, then the conscience is also untrustworthy. The man who puts his confidence in himself alone is ever in danger, like the sophists, of "making the worse appear the better reason." The force of moral distinctions is disturbed by considerations of self-interest. The highest aphorism of this man is, "Honesty is the best policy," which makes policy or self-interest the supreme thing.

It is saddening to observe how many of our most reputable men are wont to take refuge in evil-doing under the shield of great corporations. It is true that corporations are soulless, but their affairs are administered by men of immortal souls. And were it not for a melancholy

default of conscience, the stockholders of our great trusts and monopolies must perforce regard themselves as responsible for their ill-doing. Be not partakers of other men's sins.

A similar token of the untrustworthiness of a personal sense of honor in matters pertaining to conscience may be seen in the present conduct of the press. Its editors, as a rule, are respectable men, yet taking advantage of their impersonal position, they often array themselves against measures directed at the purification of political and social life. In their individual affairs they would recoil from the violation of a law or the breach of a contract, and yet, with scarcely an exception, they uphold the Directorate of the Columbian Fair who have been guilty just there. It appears that the conscience of the man who sets religion aside is not to be trusted in the thick of conflict. The chance arrow enters at his eyes.

IV. A loose *girdle*. In the olden time, at the sound of the tocsin, the order was given to tighten the girdle, and so strengthen the loins. This girdle corresponds with the *will*. But the will sympathizes with heart and brain and conscience. The natural man is wont to trust to his resolution; yet how often it occurs that when most needed, resolution fails.

The most suggestive proof of the weakness of the human will is in the so-called Keely Cure for inebriety. We were accustomed to say to the inebriate, "If you would conquer your habit, lay hold on God;" and we were answered, "I can do this thing myself; all depends upon the power of resolution. Where there is a will there is a way." Now, however, on all hands there is an appeal to something beyond the province of the will.

It must needs be that a man who has fallen under the

domination of a habit shall have help from without, for the conflict is one of self against self. We go out against our darling sins. A soldier who had fought valiantly in many battles met one day at close quarters an enemy the sight of whose face paralyzed his arm. It was his own brother. He could not fire at him! But how much more difficult it is for a man to contend against himself! We need the strengthening of the Mighty One. O God hold thou me up!

V. No *shield*. The shield covered the whole person from head to foot. The shield of the believer is *faith*. Here is the secret of his defence: he believes in God as his Creator, who breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; he believes in God as his Preserver, caring for him as He cares for the flowers of the field and the birds of the air; he believes in God as his Saviour, who came to suffer and to die for his deliverance from sin; he believes in God as his Sanctifier, who stands ever near strengthening, emboldening, and building him up in character by giving him a practical acquaintance with truth and righteousness; he believes in God as his Sovereign, competent to rule over and able to protect him. We are told that there is an epidemic of suicide at this time. If the soul is without the defence of faith, if it has no strong confidence in God and truth and morality, what shall hinder the reckless deed—

“ Mad from life's history,  
Glad to death's mystery  
Swift to be hurled—  
Anywhere, anywhere, out of the world!”

VI. No *sword*. The sword of the Spirit is the *Word of God*. He is an unarmed man who trusts to mere

opinion and conjecture. Our effective weapon is a "Thus saith the Lord." Our Saviour when tempted in the wilderness thus defended himself. "Cause that these stones shall be made bread," said his adversary. "No," he answered, "*it is written*, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." "Behold the kingdoms," said the tempter; "all these shall be thine if thou wilt but fall down and worship me." "No," said Jesus, "*it is written*, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God." "Cast thyself down," said the Evil One, "for he shall give his angels charge over thee." "No," answered our Saviour, "*it is written*, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." The sword of the Spirit which was flashed so effectively in the wilderness that day is an effective weapon to-day for every one who will use it.

Thus it is seen that the panoply of the natural man who is without religion is defective at every point. It may indeed serve him for a season, but it fails at the critical moment. Has this been your dependence, good friend? And have you found it vain? What shall be done? Come to the Lord's citadel and prepare yourself for life's conflict. "Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Eph. 6: 13-17.

And then watch and pray! The need of watchfulness



lies in the fact that we are not yet fully free from the bondage of our sin. If we have trusted in Jesus, our panoply cannot be pierced, the gates of hell shall not prevail against us ; but it may be dented and we may be hard be-  
stead. Watch, therefore, lest ye be brought into shame and sorrow by reason of sin.

And pray, pray without ceasing.

“ Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,  
The Christian's native air,  
His watchword at the gates of death :  
He enters heaven by prayer.”

So panoplied and armed, fight the good fight of faith,  
lay hold on eternal life, and God's grace be with you !

## THE SONG OF THE VINEYARD.

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"Judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?"  
Isa. 5:3.

THE reign of Uzziah was marked by peace and prosperity. His name means the "strength of Jehovah," and surely God helped him. The wild Arab tribes were subdued, the Amorites were forced to pay tribute, the fortresses of the Philistines were brought low, the internal resources of the kingdom were developed on every side, towers were built on the frontiers of the desert, wells were dugged in the Jordan valley, fields were planted on the sunny slopes of Carmel. Thus it is written, "The king strengthened himself exceedingly." The dews and rains of heaven were not withheld, harvests were plenteous, garners were full. But prosperity brought on spiritual pride; true worship declined; the people, while keeping up outward forms of devotion, forsook the Lord.

Then Isaiah came to admonish them. He stood between the pillars of the temple and cried, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Isa. 1:2, 3.

Still the formal services of the sanctuary went on; the brazen altar smoked continually and the golden altar sent up an unceasing tribute of gratitude. It was the mere outward shell of worship, with which God is never pleased.

Again Isaiah lifted his voice in the temple porch: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord; I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with. I am weary to bear them. When ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well." Isa. 1:11-17.

All else failing, the Lord resorted to chastisement, blow upon blow: the visitation of locusts, the drought, the earthquake, in which the valleys were cleft asunder and the mountains were melted as in a furnace. Again the prophet lifted up his voice: "Why should ye be stricken any more? The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint. Your country is desolate, your cities burned with fire, and the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

It was on one of these frequent occasions of admonition that the song of the vineyard was uttered. It is a poem of wonderful beauty. "I will sing a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it and gath-

ered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down; and I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up thorns and briars; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." Isa. 5 : 1-7.

Here is God's vindication of himself in his dealings with the children of men. He means them well; he would have them to be saved. "As I live, saith the Lord," swearing by himself because he could swear by no greater, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he should turn from his ways and live." "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" In these overtures of mercy he is no respecter of persons. All have a fair chance, nothing is exacted which is not reasonable. His voice calls, his hands beckon; if anybody is lost it will not be God's fault. Here is his appeal: "Judge ye betwixt me and my vineyard—what more could have been done that I have not done in it?"

It is here suggested that God has exhausted his re-

sources, so to speak, in our behalf. Let us observe in three particulars what God has done to bring the human race up to a realization of its high destiny.

I. *The planting of the tree.* Man, as originally created, was in a state of moral equilibrium. He was innocent, but without that form of positive character which is the result of exercise. If he is to possess this he must strive for it. Fixed character is the outcome of trial. The tree in the garden was designed to be the touchstone of Adam's character. "In the day that thou eatest thereof," he was admonished, "thou shalt surely die." He is there to obey or not. This is in the necessity of the case. It is inconceivable that God could have created man in his own likeness without endowing him with a sovereign will—but that implies the liberty to break the command as well as to keep it. If the man obeys he will be confirmed in character and fit for his high destiny as an heir of God. Yonder is the tree. Here is Adam with his free will. He has the opportunity, literally, of making a man of himself. As Edward III. said to the Black Prince, when hard pressed at the battle of Cressy, "Son, win thy spurs to-day," so God gives to Adam this opportunity. But he lost it.

Was there anything unfair or unreasonable in this trial? Was the ordeal beyond the power of this man? No, the garden was full of trees laden with fruit. There was only one tree there of which it was said, "Thou shalt not eat of it." The disobedience of Adam must be regarded as an utterly perverse and quite unreasonable thing. In spite of God's command and distinct admonition, he disobeyed and fell. And the results of that fall have been transmitted to his children for evermore. How could it be otherwise? Heredity is an established fact.

Whether we like it or not, it is a tremendous fact. The drunkard's son suffers for his father's folly. He bears the shame, the poverty of it. He inherits the vicious appetite, the dimmed intellect, the seared conscience, the palsied will. Is this unjust? Whether unjust or not, it is an indubitable fact. It is under this law of heredity that we have come by "original sin." We were there when Adam sinned, we were *ipso facto* in the garden, and could not but receive the taint of our father's guilt. In Adam's fall we sinned all.

Thus the tree which was designed for the confirmation of man's character must, from our standpoint, be regarded as a failure. What shall be done now? Will God give Adam up? will he leave him and his children to their fate? In all reason, yes! They deserved it. But he is a gracious God, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He will save this man and his children yet. The world made for his glory shall ultimately be inhabited by a holy people.

II. *The giving of the law.* This is the covenant of works. The moral law was given for the uplifting of the race. It was a gratuity. We are accustomed to make grace the antithesis of law. In fact, however, the law itself is free grace. It was of God's good pleasure that he said, "Do these things and ye shall live by them."

Observe, (1.) The law has in it a *genuine possibility of life*. The word *torah*, its Hebrew original, means a *finger*, an index finger pointing to heaven.

Observe, (2.) It is *naturally possible to keep the law*. Otherwise it would have been a mockery to give it. This is capable of demonstration. You can lay your finger on no sin in all your past life and say, "I could not avoid it." Sin is not sin unless it is voluntary, that is to say, avoid-



able. Every act of impurity, untruthfulness, dishonesty, impiety that ever was committed was wrought in pure perverseness, and the whole indictment of our lives is made up of single sins. It follows, therefore, that we might have kept the law.

Observe, (3.) The law has *power to save* ONLY when it is *kept to the letter*. "Cursed be he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them." Yet again, "Who-soever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." The strength of an anchor-chain is measured by the strength of its weakest link. Break that, and the ship is at the mercy of the storm. Obedience is the electric wire that binds earth to heaven. Cut out a single inch and the circuit is broken, the soul is alienated from God.

Observe, (4.) So far as we are aware the law was never kept by any man. You never kept it; you never heard of any one that kept it. God himself says that he looked down from heaven to see if there was any that wrought righteousness, and "Behold there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Paul says we are all "concluded under sin, there is no difference; we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God."

It would appear, therefore, that the law also, as designed to bring men into the possession of positive character, was a failure. Its value lies not in its saving power, but in the fact that it serves as a schoolmaster to lead the soul to something further on. We are accustomed to regard Moses, and rightly so, as the personation of the law. He did not enter into the Land of Promise. Up at the summit of Nebo he looked abroad upon it, the broad acres clothed with verdure, bathed in Oriental sunshine—but he could not enter in. The man who lives under the law

will never be saved by it. He may, like the young ruler whom Jesus loved, be not far from the kingdom, but by reason of imperfect obedience he cannot enter in.

III. *The rearing of the cross.* This is the covenant of grace. "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." (Rom. 8:3, 4.) He sent his only-begotten Son to make overtures for our deliverance, saying, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Two necessary things are wrought under this covenant of grace which must otherwise remain undone:

(1.) *Forgiveness.* The mislived past is erased and forgiven. This is impossible under the law. The law knows no pardon, but the bleeding hand of Jesus nails to the cross the handwriting of ordinances which was against us and takes it out of the way. He satisfies the law by expiating our sins and thus solves the problem, how God could be just and yet justify the ungodly. The cross is the wine-press set in the midst of the vineyard. Out of heaven came the only-begotten Son of the Father to tread the winepress alone. The wine that flowed forth was for our deliverance—the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin—and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

(2.) *Justification.* We need not pardon only, but a positive righteousness which shall entitle us to an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God.

But this we cannot win for ourselves, it is bestowed upon us by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The

same piercé hand that nailed our indictment to the accursed tree casts about us the garment of the Lord's righteousness, fine linen, white and clean. Thus our justification is completed. The watch-tower is built in the midst of the vineyard and God himself keeps guard. "No man shall pluck them out of my hand," he says; "the gates of hell shall not prevail against them." "What shall we say then to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we were accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

As Moses stands for the personation of the law, so Joshua stands for the living type of grace. What Moses could not do, Joshua did; he entered into the Promised Land and led the people with him dry shod, passing between the crystal walls of the river; and they took possession of the land.

The challenge of the Lord is therefore submitted to

you as reasonable men, "What more could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" The sequence of that question is another—"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment; and he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding-garment?" And he was speechless. "Was it not offered thee at the door? was it not offered for naught?" And the man could answer not a word. So shall they be at the great Reckoning who have lived in gospel light and yet rejected all the overtures of grace. They will answer not a word. How can they? There will be nothing to say.







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